THE SECRET OF EXISTENCE OR THE GOSPEL OF ACTION

KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

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THE SECRET OF EXISTENCE

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THE SECRET OF EXISTENCE
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WOMEN IN ISLAM
JESUS, AN IDEAL OF GODHEAD HUMANITY
LEAGUE OF FAITH

THE SECRET OF EXISTENCE OR THE GOSPEL OF ACTION

BY

THE KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

TRANSLATED FROM THE *URDU* BY

MUHAMMAD YAKUB KHAN

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THE SHAIKH SAHIB

SHAIKH MUHAMMAD JAHANGIR MIA SAHIB

RULER OF MANGROL

INDIA

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

WE live in a world of realities—a world of Law, where things follow a particular fixed course. Religion comes to bring us face to face with these realities, and teach us how best to grapple with them. How to play this game of life—that is its sole function to tell. Like showers of rain — so the Holy Qur-án puts it — which whisper a message of life into a dead sod, Divine Revelation comes to revive and resuscitate. To quicken man—that, if anything, is the one purpose of religion. In a word, religion comes to equip man for the struggle of life, to make man manly.

Man, however, will not take life as such. He likes to take the line of least resistance and a struggle hardly appeals to him. He is apt to take things rather easy. And he is not slow to put his own interpretation on religion in line with this inner propensity. Generally, he takes to two courses: he divorces religion from life, reducing the former to mere ritualism which costs him little exertion; and he makes himself believe that his labelling himself after a particular denomination entitles him to a privileged position with the Lord. Both these views are the offspring of the same weakness—the longing to find in this life a soft bed of roses. He shirks

to look realities squarely in the face. He loves to live in a dreamland of his own and has no difficulty in creating one out of his own fancy—a fool's paradise, one might say. Thus the very object of religion is defeated.

To say that religion is something distinct from life, is a mistaken notion. There is no detail of our daily life, but is deep rooted in religion. We think not a thought, nor utter a word, nor do a deed, but each has a religious bearing of its own. Religion is co-extensive with life. We can no more get away from religion than we can from our shadow. Religion, abstracted from work-a-day life is, in fact, a will o' the wisp. Nor is there any such thing as favouritism with the Lord. His love is open to all alike—a fair field and no favour. The paths leading thereto are also accessible to all alike. Whoever would have it must win it, and this requires *doing*.

The world of Islam has of late witnessed its lowest ebb and the reason must be sought in this miscomprehension of the true essence of religion. The Muslim of to-day has fallen a prey to this same mood. The various principles of Islam calculated to tone their fibre to a manly life of strife and struggle, he has perverted into so many doses of narcotics. Faith, Prayer, Predestination, Intercession, and the like, meant as so many weapons for the Muslim's armoury with which to brave this rough and tumble of life, he has degenerated into so many clogs on the free play of his soul. This, to my mind, has

been the sole cancer at the heart of the Muslim, which has belighted the very juice of his life—this mistaken view of the nature of life and the false attitude he has adopted thereto. So if a panacea there could be, for his malady, it would be none other than the restoration of a true perspective of life.

This forms the theme of these pages and there could be none of more vital concern to the Muslim at the present day. Research in religion has been the author's sole mission in life; and of his insight into the true meaning of religion he has made a remarkable display, in the elucidation of this question. The Khwaja Kamal-ud-din, when he addressed himself to this much needed task was out on his tour of India, Burma and the Straits Settlements to study the conditions of Muslims at first hand and was at the time staying in Sourabaya (Java). His nervous breakdown which overtook him while yet in England, in consequence of the heavy strain on his mental system, in connection with his missionary activities in this country, did not permit him in person to wield his pen. He had to depend on a scribe. Notwithstanding this handicap, the work contains a wealth of thought and force. The *Urdu* (Hindustani) manuscript thus prepared in November 1920 saw the light of day in July 1921. The Book was dedicated to the Shaikh Sahib Shaikh Muhammad Jahangir Mia Sahib, the Ruler of Mangrol State, at whose instance the work was taken in hand.

The *Urdu* edition met with a befitting reception amongst the Urdu-speaking classes, and this prompted me to give it this *English* garb for the benifit of the vast number of English-speaking Muslims all the world over, to whom the original is not accessible. I have taken care to retain the style and tone of the original and have done my best to put it as though the author were speaking to the readers. Should it succeed in kindling the heart of one Muslim with the true light of Islam, this bit of labour would be more than amply repaid.

Muhammad Yakub Khan.

The Mosque, Woking,
March 26, 1923.

FOREWORD

"Be aware that Allah revives the earth after its death."—The Holy Qur-án, lvii. 17.

THE Muslim has fallen on bad times. His past glory has forsaken him. His might, his honour have deserted him. To his rivals, on the look out to pounce upon him, his days are already numbered. Nevertheless, thank Allah! he has after all awakened to a sense of the critical situation he is in. But he is more like a man who has been enjoying a deep slumber but awakened all of a sudden through some turmoil around him; he jumps to his feet and rushes about in the dark in utter consternation, to avoid what he vaguely perceives to be an imminent danger but cannot properly locate. Such exactly is the bewildered astonishment with which the newly aroused Muslim looks around him. The grim danger is there, before him. But he cannot make out where to find a way out. Confusion has seized his senses and he is blindly scampering, now this way, now that, fondly hoping there to come across an Open Sesame. And no wonder. What he is thus after may prove to be his salvation or may turn out to be a will-o'-the-wisp, mocking him with a false hope of acquisition. Nay, it may be something positively

harmful to him—a course drifting him against the rock of destruction instead of leading to a haven of safety. Death is staring him in the face. He is wildly struggling for self-preservation. He has taken a step, but it is a leap in the dark. Perchance it may fall upon the right path or it may bring him face to face with yet greater perils. And what is still more unfortunate, it is in a juncture like this that hypocrisy, putting on the mask of sympathy, friendship and fellow-feeling, turns the situation to its own advantage. Leaders, guides, friends and supporters crop up like mushrooms, posing as deliverers, but under that cover bending the unfortunate victim to be subservient to their personal ends.

But is there no way out of this confusion, no light to guide us out of this darkness? Has not the Holy Qur-án made this assertion concerning itself: "This is a book we have revealed to thee, so that it may with Allah's permission lead people out of darkness toward Light—towards the path which may make them respected and praised". The very object of the revelation of this Book was the revival of the dead to life. The world at its inauguration was morally and spiritually dead and was restored to life with this very Book. Even to-day we are in possession of the same Book. We have taken good care to wrap them up in fancy coverings and given them a place of honour in our houses, but we seldom open them to find out guidance therein. No doubt we do also uncover and open

them at times, but only when we want to take an augury. We place it on our heads too, but simply to take an oath thereby. "O my Lord! Surely my people have forsaken this Qur-án!" were the prophetic words foretold over thirteen centuries ago concerning a section of the Holy Prophet's followers. Woe unto us that of all the posterity of Islam, our generation has turned out to be the one complained against in these words.

But better late than never. Even now let us rise to make up the leeway. There is no reason for despair and despondency. "Do not slacken and do not grieve," are the consoling words of the same Book, "for surely you are the highest people, provided you are believers." Now, if the Holy Qur-án is—and surely it is—the spring of life, why do you not drink deep of it? If it is the straight path—and surely it is—why, then, do you not tread along it? "We have not neglected anything in the Book," claims the Holy Qur-án itself, to cheer us up lest we should give way to despair in times of trials and tribulation. And do we not take it as such? Do we not look upon it as the panacea for all human ailments? Why, then, this consternation? Why this catching at every drifting straw? This is the right path; take to it resolutely and unswervingly, and however uncertain the weather and unchartered the waters, it is sure to steer your bark clear to the haven of safety.

The thought of how recklessly Muslims have thrown off the choicest jewels of the Holy Qur-án,

brings tears to my eyes. Never have I come across any standard European work on human civilization, but I have invariably found it to be a dim reflection of the teachings met with in their perfect form in the pages of the Holy Qur-án. But woe unto us, we have ignored them as worthless pebbles. My heart aches within me and I say to myself: "These laws of life are nothing compared with what we have in the Holy Qur-án; how is it that the people having the Qur-án for their guide are sunk so low?" The Holy Qur-án itself comes to tell me the reason for the fallen state of Muslims. "They deserted me," it says, "so God deserted them."

To-day we mourn the loss of Khilafat, and what can be a more deplorable loss? The Holy Qur-án has promised us a Khilafat—a Khilafat with which is bound up the fulfilment of another Divine promise which is dearer to a Muslim heart above all else, viz. the security of the Sacred Places from hostile aggression. We are anxious, and legitimately so, to see our Holy Places in Muslim hands—hands free from all non-Muslim influence. We do not want to see an internecine war among the Arab tribes, set by their ears by foreign diplomacy, and the sacred soil of Arabia thus soaked in Muslim blood. We must have the land of Hedjaz for the exclusive rambles of the Haji (Pilgrim), and none but the Haji. Are these demands of ours illegitimate and these sentiments vain? What, I may ask, roused the zeal of the Mediæval Crusader?

The few pieces of bricks, stones and timber, piled together in the form of what is known as the Church of Resurrection or the church built on the spot where Jesus is believed to have been interred after crucifixion, as well as to have arisen from the dead? This very edifice was at the bottom of all bloodshed. Does not the British Government undertake expeditions out of mere regard for the sentiments of Christians? Does not the protection of the Christian missionary often lead to political troubles? *What special claims have Christians upon the British Government? Muslims form the major portion of the British subjects.* The Government is in duty bound to show towards Muslims sentiments tenfold the regard it has for those of Christians.

But I ask Muslims if they have ever given a moment's thought to the real causes that led to the downfall of the Khilafat. Deviation from the Qur-án was the chief cause at work in Muslim lands long before the Great War as much as to-day. The Muslim power was in fact already at its last gasp when the war came just as the last straw to break its backbone. The house was already hollow, and the war did no more than just the part of a gust of wind in pulling it down. We are anxious to retrieve our lost power, but unfortunately we lack the requisite worth and mettle to retain such power. It is not in fact the loss of power that we should mourn, but the loss of the virtues, the capacities that lead to the attainment as well as maintenance

of power. These infuse life into dead nations, bring them to power and sustain them in power. But these cannot be had for the mere asking. Nay, they cannot come from without. They must spring up and be fostered from within. No external agency, however potent, can instil them into a human soul.

The Secret of Existence, so far as I have been able to glean from the pages of the Holy Qur-án, may be put in one phrase—POWER OF ACTION—the power which was crushed some four or five centuries before the advent of Islam by the creed founded by St. Paul, wrongly labelled after the name of Jesus. In direct contravention of the teachings of his Master, he twisted what was a Gospel of action into the Gospel of inaction. He proclaimed that the world had so far been in the shackles of the law and action, of which Jesus came to liberate it. Salvation could thus be achieved not by means of virtuous deeds on man's part, but through faith in the blood of Jesus. Luther also endorsed the view that salvation was bound up with faith, having nothing to do with deeds. What detrimental effect it had on European civilization during the early period of Christianity and the Mediæval Ages needs no dwelling upon. Roman and Grecian civilizations were swept off. The gates of knowledge and of deeds were blocked up. Indifference, indolence, inertness became the order of the day. In a word, Christian Europe was in the grip of exactly the same curse which we find has hold

of the Muslim world to-day. The thick darkness of ignorance enshrouded the whole of Europe. India, too, fared no better at the time. The ascetic idealism of Buddhism on the one hand and the Hindu metaphysical theory of *Maya* tended to sap man's vitality. In this widespread state of death-like inertia the Holy Qur-án called the world to the GOSPEL OF ACTION. Faith and deeds were inseparably bound up in each other, so that the one could not exist without the other. Deeds were regarded as indispensable for the growth and development of faith as water for that of a plant. Wherever it spoke of "those who believe and do good deeds," it invariably illustrated this spiritual truth by inviting attention to the physical phenomenon of "gardens with streams of water flowing underneath them," thus teaching man that the secret of life, vitality and prosperity lies in the POWER OF ACTION, even as the thriving of a garden depends upon water. The SECRET OF EXISTENCE, it taught, must be looked for in the GOSPEL OF ACTION.

Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din.

Surabaya (Java),
January 28, 1921.

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CHAPTER I.

THE GOSPEL OF FELICITY.

"Whatever (a soul) has earned is for its own benefit and (the evil of) whatever it has wrought is upon it."—THE HOLY QUR-ÁN, ii. 286.

MY gain and my loss are the direct outcome of my own deeds. I am the author of my own pleasure and my own pain. My rise, my fall are my own handiwork. My honour, my dishonour, my luck, my ill-luck, my might, my humiliation, my glory, my degradation, are each one and all the fruits of my own actions. I am the paddler of my own canoe, the architect of the edifice of my own life. The various capabilities embedded in my nature are meant to be subservient to me, the forces of nature exist to minister to my good. But it is my own capacity and competence properly to handle them, that make them useful or harmful, helpful or baneful to me. Turn my steps whither I may, towards acclivity or declivity, all these things keep pace with me. All around me, above me or beneath me, there is nothing, whether an insignificant blade of grass or a passing gust of wind, which is not the repository of some blessing or other to me. But the blessings latent in all these things await my own hands to bring

them out. A wrong manipulation of them may turn the same blessings into instruments of ruin and destruction. Water and fire, those great gifts of God, may become veritable heaven or hell for me; it depends on my own actions. In brief, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, brightness and gloom, in this life as in the hereafter, are but the shadows and reflections of my own doings.

The Qur-ánic verse quoted above, though small to look at, is in fact the sacred gospel, which, if lived up to, will bring down all idols of worldly grandeur to an equal footing with man, or even make them subservient to him. This gospel, the GOSPEL OF ACTION, is the very essence of self-realization and the secret of self-respect. Man has ever been bowing his head before another, for the achievement of his own good or the avoidance of his own evil. There was a time when he looked upon the various forces of nature as the controllers of his good and evil. Hence arose fantastic forms of pagan adoration—tree-worship, stone-worship, star-worship and element-worship. Sometimes he attributed his good and evil fortune to the influence of certain imperceptible beings from whom sprang all sorts of superstitious beliefs in invisible controlling agencies, such as genii, spirits, ghosts and fairies. With the lapse of time, he came to look up to his fellow human beings for the realization of his ends. This killed within him all sense of self-respect, making him meanly servile to others, and, as the natural consequence, destroyed self-

reliance. He never worried himself to work out his own salvation, through the exercise of his own innate capabilities. These, therefore, were never brought into play, and got atrophied, in the course of time. His brain got overclouded. He could not see his own way. His bridle was handed over to others, his fellow-men, with exactly the same flesh and blood. In a word, he lost his manhood and was chased helplessly hither and thither like dumb, driven cattle, at the beck and call of his self-made masters.

It was as a safeguard against such ignominy that the Holy Qur-án had invited the Muslims' attention, in the garb of a parable, to a great moral truth. But as ill-luck would have it, the Muslims, losing sight of the underlying lesson, contented themselves with the empty parrot-like repetition of the words. They, unfortunately, missed the spirit inculcated therein, which alone, and no amount of lip-repetition of the sacred script, could elevate them to human dignity. "What! Is he who goes prone upon his face better guided or he who walks upright upon a straight path?" (The Holy Qur-án, lxvii. 22). These Divine words allude to two distinct classes of creation—the quadrupeds whose necks and heads are bending towards the ground, and man, the lord of creation, who holds his head upright on his shoulders. Let man try to appreciate what the Qur-án means. Let him look at the structure of his neck, the respective positions of the eyes and the ears, and compare these to those of

lower animals, and then ponder over the Divine purpose which has ordained that such differences should be. An animal cannot look far ahead, while man's horizon is unbounded. The former's neck does not permit of its seeing right or left to a great distance, but the flexibility of that of the latter enables him to survey all sides. This is the reason why, to keep the horse on the straight path, its reins must needs be held by man. But woe unto the poor wretch who, notwithstanding all the Divine capabilities with which he is endowed, has handed over his leading-strings to others, and is driven by them like lower animals. In morals, in actions, in character, in short, in every phase of their life, Muslims have lost their own peculiarities. Discarding *Sibghat-Ullah*, i. e. the colouring of Allah, they took a fancy to the glimmer and glitter of the base and tawdry hues of others, and imbued themselves with the same. Call it civilization or whatever you will, in our estimation, this relegates you to the category of those of whom the Qur-án speaks as "going with their heads bent." You will not be entitled to the dignified epithet of MAN until you hold your reins in your own hands; until your necks have resumed their natural upright posture; until you make your way with your own eyes; until you use your own ears to form an opinion on world-affairs; not reposing blind faith in another's word as Gospel truth.

The very next verse invites attention to this very truth: "Say: He it is who brought you

into being and made for you ears, eyes and hearts, but little it is that you give thanks." Thanksgiving does not consist in the repetition of the words *Alhamd-o-Lillah,* i. e. all praise to Allah. Real gratitude lies in the right use of every Divine endowment. Lip-gratitude counts for little. You may do it a million times a day, for the Divine gifts of eyes, ears and heart, but you will still be of the most ungrateful ones, should you fail to make a right use of these organs, for yourself, and be guided by others' eyes, ears and hearts, leaving your own to rot in inactivity. It is noteworthy how beautifully the Holy Qur-án makes mention of man's ears, eyes and heart, directly after referring to his neck. As a matter of fact, these two, of all the five sense-organs of man, play the major part in the acquisition of knowledge. Sight and hearing bring together facts and figures from surrounding nature, and submit them to the heart for judgment and transformation into knowledge for the guidance of human steps in future.

In brief, the man who does not know how to make use of his ears and eyes, head and heart for himself, falls, according to the Divine decree, under the category of the lower species of animals. He must be driven by others, inevitably keep plodding under others' yoke, and carry others' burdens. Day and night, he will exert himself tooth and nail, but the fruits of his labours will be for others to enjoy. He will get just as much of it as may suffice to keep his

soul and body together. The whole lot will go to enrich the pocket of his driving master.

To-day, Muslims all over the world mourn their wretched plight. They have lost their kingdoms, their might and majesty, and are now bewailing the gruesome loss. But they seldom for a moment ponder over the fact that their deterioration has in no way been wrought by alien hands. It is not the enemy that can be held responsible for the collapse of the Muslim's house. Nay, the edifice was already tottering. Of course those on the look-out for his fall eagerly seized upon the opportunity which only served as a last straw to break the camel's back. The Muslims have for long abandoned thinking for themselves. For long has the power of action disappeared from among them. Having fallen a prey to their baser passions, they have lost their faculties of seeing and hearing. Why, then, should they lament that in the course of the natural order of cause and effect, their leading-strings should rest in other hands. In fact, we have no pretext for grumbling. We have wrought our degradation with our own hands. The immutable law of nature as expounded in the Holy Qur-án— "Whatever (a soul) has earned is for its own benefit and (the evil of) whatever it has wrought is upon it" —knows no distinction between man and man. It must apply equally to all, and to-day we find ourselves as we do, in just conformity with this law. The Divine decree announced over thirteen centuries ago— "Verily Allah does not alter the

condition of a people unless they alter their own ways" —has this day been enforced against us. Divine judgment has found us guilty, and has accordingly visited us with the punishment which is our just due.

Thus the Qur-ánic verse brings to mankind what may be termed the GOSPEL OF ACTION. Whatever we acquire or whatever befalls us, that, the Divine Word assures us, is the direct outcome of our own actions. Could there be a more blissful message to mankind? It is the Magna Charta, so to speak, of human freedom. It liberates man from the shackles of innumerable superstitions and breathes into him a spirit of self-reliance and independence. It gives an impetus to his dormant energies, bringing them, one and all, into play. His heart is purged of every form of false hope and fear and attains complete and genuine satisfaction. He is enabled to set his hand to his work, with a sense of thorough confidence in himself. So long as a man looks upon his good and evil as dependent upon others, he loses what is the indispensable essential of all success—self-reliance. He cannot trust to his own capabilities. He loses pluck, and the goal of all his efforts is to win the good graces of his imaginary masters. He thinks that effort on his own part will avail him little; for his good and evil wait upon the sweet will of another. Do whatever he may, all his exertions will come to nought unless he succeeds in winning the pleasure of one whom he regards as the controller of his

destiny. Thus, quite naturally, he turns away from self-exertion and addresses himself soul and heart to what may win him his pleasure. And what is the logical corollary of such a frame of mind? Annihilation of all power of action and devotion to superstitious and mean practices, such as offerings, sacrifices, atonement, intercessions and so forth. He must submit to loathsome humiliations before his supposed lords. Even then, however, he has no assurance as to whether his offerings and sacrifices have succeeded in pleasing them, and whether they will at all be able to save him from any trouble or grant him any blessing.

Is not this the true picture of a mind which, lacking in self-reliance, looks up to another for its loss and gain? What, then, can be a happier message than the one communicated through the Qur-án to mankind by the Almighty, in whose hands lie true felicity and good, and which may be summed up thus:

> Your pain and pleasure, loss and gain are not bound up with some element or phenomenon of nature, the sun, the moon, the star, the tree; nor do they rest with any human being, be he a hermit or a saint, a *rishi, autar* or a Prophet, a citizen or a ruler. It is entirely in your own hands whether you make or mar your fortune; We have only prescribed certain limits to everything, which are immutable. A particular measure of something must lead to a good result, while another proportion of

the same thing will be prolific of evil. This, and no more than this, is the philosophy of the problem of *Taqdîr* or fate in Islam, which has been so commonly misunderstood. The specific measures leading to good or evil, are either made known to you through Revelation from Us, or you acquire their knowledge on your own account by scientific processes. In the light of the knowledge gained in either way, you must work out your own destiny. As you work out the means at your disposal, rightly or wrongly, so the consequences, good or evil, must inevitably follow, as certainly as the night follows the day. Whatever you will sow, the same will you reap. Good must beget good and evil, evil. Should you sow the dragon's teeth, you must expect a similar crop. *No amount of ransom, no atonement, no intercession, Will avail in averting the inevitable.* There are, no doubt, some other sets of means whereby you may expiate your mistakes and avert their bitter consequences, but these too require doing on your own part.

You must bear in mind as well, that there is nothing in this vast universe but what is pregnant with immense good for you, and nothing happens but it is intended for your welfare. It is your own wrong way of reacting upon things that converts them into evil for you. But even in laying down

this law of actions and their fruits, We have been gracious to you. The wrong on your part is visited with no more than just the same measure of punishment, but a virtue is rewarded tenfold. In a word, your own deeds are all in all. Good or evil follows your actions in the same ratio of ten and one, even as an object is followed by its shadow. This is the GOSPEL OF ACTION, which We give to you.

Have faith in your own capacities for work. No human power shall then be able to hurt you. You are not born to be servile to others. The rulers and the ruled see the light of day in a state of equal helplessness, and in exactly the same manner both leave this earthly abode. Rule and subjection are but the passing shadows of their own deeds. Every atom in the universe has been designed to be subservient to your good. But you must yourself take the first step in order to be the recipient of the blessings in store for you, to say nothing of others; even We with all our might have been pleased to refrain from interfering with the chain of causation between actions and their fruits; as We have said in the Book: "Verily, Allah does not alter the condition of a people until they bring about a change in their own ways."

This, in brief, is the purport of the Qur-ánic teaching, a comparison of which to the foregoing

dispensations cannot but force us to the conclusion that the Qur-án has been a source of infinite bliss to mankind. But for this teaching, it is not possible that the faculties of man should find full development. The latent capabilities of man cannot attain actualization unless the GOSPEL OF ACTION should become the guiding principle of his life. Moreover, the powers lying dormant in human nature, when brought into play, work a surprising transformation in the world. The hidden forces of nature are thereby explored and controlled, and the rich treasures embedded in the universe are thereby unearthed. Action, and nothing but action, is the high road to a knowledge of the principles regulating the machinery of this universe. It is to such a man that the various forces of nature, termed angels in religious phraseology, tender submission. "He (God) taught Adam", says the Holy Qur-án, "the principles of all things, and then (the angels) all fell prostrate before him, excepting Satan".

The mighty transformation wrought in the world by Islam, was, in fact, the outcome of this very truth—the principle of action—which the Holy Qur-án expounded so lucidly. All the religious systems before Islam sprang, as the Holy Qur-án says from the same Divine source, and hence brought the same GOSPEL OF ACTION. The Mosaic law, the Karma creed of the Brahmans, the teachings of Krishna in the Gita, all point to the same truth. Yet the people following these creeds failed to realize the true worth of the force

of action, and gave themselves up to all sorts of polytheistic and superstitious practices.

Constituted as man is, he is prone to shirk self-exertion. He inclines to an easy-going sort of life. He is fond of coming into possession of what others have done. He shoves off his responsibilities to the shoulders of others. This weakens the power of action and tends to drive man towards doctrines such as atonement or intercession. It is just like our hankering after the philosopher's stone or the elixir. Our object in striving after these things is exactly the same—the shirking of labour. We want to be able to transmute therewith any base metal into gold, and thus enjoy a life of plenty, without the least exertion on our part. Our doctrines of faith, through the same ease-seeking tendency of our nature, assume a similar form. Europe too, was sunk, a few centuries back, in this very degradation. To-day, however, she is no longer in the grip of that curse. She has found out how to convert iron into gold. Through the alchemy of labour, she sells iron even dearer than gold. In the realm of religion, however, she is still wallowing in mediaeval ignorance. To this day, there prevails the belief that in matters spiritual, though not in material, there yet exists a philosopher's stone—the blood of Jesus, mere faith in which automatically elevates the low nature of man, purges it of all evils and gives it a passport to Heaven.

What a detrimental effect this doctrine of atonement has upon man's power of action is ob-

vious enough. It deals a death-blow to one's sense of responsibility for his deeds, and with that saps the vital springs of motive power. Facts belie the assertion that baptism eliminates the tendency to evil from the nature of man. On the contrary, atonement, offering security against nemesis, countenances perpetration of sin. Hence, in respect of certain evils, Europe is leading the van. The teachings of Jesus as well as his example are not met with anywhere in the West—in the streets of Europe, in the churches of Europe, nor in the diplomatic cabinets of Europe. Is there a vestige of Jesus-like life in the administrative policy of Europe, so far as the question of colour and race is concerned? Her social life, her self-indulgent ways, are also diametrically opposed to those of Jesus. In a word, Europe has nought in common with the ways of Jesus. This is all the outcome of the doctrine of atonement. Why, at all, should they bother to humbly walk with the Lord, when deeds count for little in the achievement of salvation? It was an ominous hour for Christianity when St. Paul laid the foundation of this doctrine, declaring law and action to be the curse of humanity. Even a man like Luther could not avoid the pitfall. He too absolved man from the necessity of deeds, considering faith in the blood of the Lord as all in all. But experience has proved at last that the law and action condemned by Paul as a curse, are, in fact, the sole source of all blessings. On the other hand, his alternative of atonement

has turned out to be a veritable curse for a vast portion of humanity.

What an anomaly however! The self-same Christian nations that do not recognize the need of law and action in affairs spiritual, have based the entire fabric of their society, polity and civilization on the basis of law. Is there a single Christian nation which does not rest on law? It would have been quite in the fitness of things, had they either abjured the Christian faith, according to which, law is a curse, or dispensed with all their legislative machineries and their courts of justice.

The doctrine of atonement, which is the basic principle of Christian theology, and which reduces action to nought, is the main differentia between Christianity and Islam. Man, it is alleged, is by his very nature incapable of observing the law, and hence his lack of power to eschew sin. Thus he renders himself liable to punishment, which cannot be evaded but through atonement. The guilt must be punished to satisfy the demand of justice. But one man cannot atone for the sins of another, as all are equally sinful. Hence the necessity of a sinless one to atone for the sins of humanity. But God alone is sinless, so He came, in the person of Jesus, to bear the cross on behalf of a sinful humanity.

This is the gist of the Christian myth. In a word, the entire fabric of the Church faith rests on the one point, that man is incapable of fulfilling the law, which is *prima facie* absurd. If we are

really so, what on earth is the justification for legislative assemblies and Governments? It is equally unwarranted to aver that the incapacity refers only to Divine Law, not to temporal law. Where to draw the line between the two forms of law is beyond our comprehension. There can be no law for the promotion of human weal but must have its origin in some Divine law or other. Is there a single law under any Government that is not traceable to some one of the ten commandments of Moses? All these are mediaeval superstitions. Whatever achievements Europe has made to-day is due solely to her power of action. What, after all, is the secret of European civilization? Scientific discoveries, which are only another name for the laws of nature. In brief, the great boon which the Holy Qur-án has offered to mankind—the doctrine of action—was won first and foremost by Muslims. They lived up to that law of nature, and made unparallelled progress. But subsequently, when they gave it up, they sank low down to the depth of degradation. On the other hand, Europe adopted this Islamic principle—THE GOSPEL OF ACTION—and attained in the sphere of matter, what had been promised to Muslims in the pages of the Holy Qur-án. What a turn of fortune! The followers of the religion which made it a point to emphasize the importance of action, discarding that golden rule of life, fell into the abyss of degradation, while those with whom action was synonymous with curse, adopted THE GOSPEL OF ACTION as inculcated by the Qur-án

in their work-a-day life, and consequently reaped the fruits thereof. In a word, Muslims accepted, in practice, if not in theory, the tutelage of Paul, whereas the followers of Paul tread upon the foot-prints of the Great Prophet of Arabia.

The Christian Church divides its sacred scriptures into two distinct parts—the Old and the New Testaments. The first begins with Genesis and ends with the book of Malachi, the other comprises the portion from Matthew to Revelation. The division is supposed to be based on the two aspects of religion, with which, according to the Church creed, God has been pleased to bind up human salvation. The first phase was that of law, given to mankind through Moses. Moses received a set of laws from God, for the guidance of man. In observing these could the latter obtain salvation. Thus according to the Mosaic dispensation, salvation was bound up with ACTION. But, unfortunately, the divine experiment failed. After centuries, the All-Wise God discovered His blunder in demanding of man what he was by nature incapable of doing—observance of Law. So the mistake was rectified and the creed of ACTION was replaced by that of GRACE. A heavy toll of sacrifice was exacted to atone for the sins of man. An innocent man was crucified, whose blood washed off human evils and brought about reconciliation between a wrathful Deity and His creatures. And thus God entered into a fresh covenant with man, saying: Whosoever of you shall have faith in the blood of Jesus and its atoning

efficacy, shall enjoy salvation, do whatever he might". This was termed the NEW COVENANT. The Old Covenant of ACTION was replaced by that of FAITH.

As a matter of fact, this forms the main line of demarcation between Islam and other world-faiths on the one side, and the Church creed on the other. The former teaches, one and all, that salvation can only be obtained through our own actions, while the Church offers it to mankind for nothing—just for the trouble, if it means any trouble at all, of professing faith in Jesus' blood. I have purposely called it the Church creed and not Christianity; for Jesus never dreamed of any such humbug. He himself was a believer in the doctrine of LAW and ACTION. In his sermon on the Mount, he lays special emphasis on observing the law. With him, man cannot find entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven but through his own deeds. Whenever a seeker-after-truth came to him for light. he told him to fulfil the law. For the development of spiritual powers too, he prescribed prayer, fasting and certain other deeds. ACTION, in short, was all in all with him, as with Moses. He never taught, not even through a remote hint, that one Covenant of Law was at an end giving place to that of GRACE. Never did he say that he would be crucified to atone for the sins of others, and that that would absolve them from the necessity of Action. His teachings, as recorded in the Gospels, give the lie direct to all such notions.

Again, it is the height of absurdity to designate such a creed as the Covenant of Grace. A doctrine that saps all motive power, a creed that strikes a death-blow at man's sense of responsibility, a principle that gives no impetus to his numerous capabilities, a dogma that tends to create inaction, stagnation and ultimate decay of all that is good and beautiful in the nature of man—such a thing to be called GRACE! Could there be a worse curse for humanity then to be deprived of all the splendid modes of self-expression and achievement possible only through action?

To call it a NEW COVENANT is likewise a betrayal of ignorance. There is nothing new in the Church dogmas—nothing that is not met with in the primitive superstitious forms of worship. Man committing sin, Deity flying into a fit of rage, sacrifices of all sorts offered to satiate His anger—this is an old old story, as old as man himself. Nor was Mary the first virgin that gave birth to a child. Many a virgin before her begot sons who were raised to Divine pedestals. Greek mythology is full of such stories. The two famous Indian dynasties of old—the Chandar Bansi and the Suraj Bansi—had their origin in two virgins. A Muslim is by faith, bound to show deep veneration for the memory of Mary, the Righteous, as the Holy Qur-án calls her. Our object is simply to show that there is not a grain of novelty in all the Church conceptions, virgins giving birth to man-gods, and propitiation of enraged deities through animal or human sacri-

fices, and the salvation of man thereby, being a myth of the remotest antiquity. Why it is called a NEW COVENANT, passes our comprehension.

Moreover the doctrine is open to another grave objection. The grace of the Lord is not the exclusive privilege of some particular race or religion. He is the Creator of all and every member of His teeming creation has an equal right to His mercy. In the distribution of His blessings He is, as He ought to have been, scrupulously unbiassed. If He has been pleased to bestow His bounties for the physical maintenance of man alike on all, why should He be partial in providing for his spiritual welfare? He could foresee the future and so He could have known that man is incapable, as the Church alleges, of observing the law. If, as Paul says, law is really a curse, why did He keep the whole world under the curse until the appearance of Jesus? Strict justice demands that the grace bestowed upon mankind at the advent of Jesus should have been awarded long long ago, at the very birth of man, to each and every nation. Adam is supposed to be the root-cause of the whole trouble. It was he that first committed sin and brought down the Divine curse on his progeny. It would thus have been quite in the fitness of things that Jesus should have been raised there and then and crucified in the garden of Eden to atone for the sin of Adam. Again, every nation of the world should have witnessed the birth of a Jesus through a virgin Mary, crucified

to wash off their sins. Divine favour must be above distinctions. Is it not an irony of fate, that for thousands of years every race, every country kept groaning under the curse of the law, while only two thousand years ago a short-cut to salvation was revealed to man? Is it anything but partiality and favouritism on the part of the Divine Being—ideas perfectly inconsistent with the conception of His Universal Fatherhood? Why were the former generations subjected to the painful process of ACTION while for the latter salvation was made so easy? Yet again, what arrangement has been made for the salvation of those who have never heard of Jesus? This may not, perhaps, be true to-day, the Church missionaries having penetrated into the most inaccessible parts of the world; but only a century or so ago, there were multitudes of people, utterly in the dark as to the NEW COVENANT, the COVENANT OF GRACE. Why condemn them to eternal perdition for no fault of theirs? It was the duty of God to have duly communicated to them that He had changed His mind, that Law would henceforth be regarded as a curse, and that salvation could only be had through grace.

CHAPTER II.

THE WILL-TO-ACTION.

As a matter of fact, Church theology is only another form of Greek Mythology. It is not possible to accept such myths unless reason is banished from the domain of religion. The superstitious beliefs into which the Church and similar other creeds are sunk, are the outcome of a wrong conception of salvation. The advocates of these dogmatic teachings are utterly ignorant of what constitutes salvation. They are all labouring under the impression that there is a particular place on the other side of the grave, furnished with every imaginable form of ease, comfort and happiness, entrance to which depends upon the sweet will of some one who has unfortunately got angry with us. Thus to win admittance into that abode of eternal merry-making, one must somehow appease his wrath. And by an analogy from their own daily life, where many an object can be achieved through presents, intercession or ransom, they conveniently believe that there too, such like methods will prevail. Hence the necessity for some sort of sacrifice and antonement, to restore us to the favour of our God.

Now, if this is the conception of salvation, the ways and means wherewith to attain it must

also be of the same type. But the true conception of a heavenly life, termed Paradise or *Falha* in the Qur-ánic parlance, is of quite a different nature. From the Islamic point of view, salvation consists in the full development of the numerous latent capabilities of man. The moral or spiritual virtues embedded in man's nature will find perfect fruition on the other side of the grave, but to develop them so as to make them fit enough for the high road of further progress there, is the work of this life. Hence it is that Islam looks upon this life as a sort of preparation-ground for the life to come. For the cultivation of this requisite aptitude, God has laid down a code of life for man to follow, which is called religion. This being the true conception of salvation, I fail to realize how ransom, intercession or atonement can be of any avail to us, in the attainment thereof. Salvation consists in the actualization of all the faculties we possess in a potential form, so as to enable us to tread along the path of progress in the Hereafter. How can the crucifixion of some one help us in the cultivation of this capacity? Will it do any good to one's headache or cure blindness, should a physician or a surgeon break his own head or pull out his own eye? Let it be taken to heart that Paradise is a state of life, to avail of which, one must possess specific types of organs and capacities, to cultivate which must be the sole purpose of human life on earth. This can only be done by observing a particular code

of life. This is the true conception of Paradise as expounded by the Holy Qur-án. Is it conceivable that the necessary capabilities should develop in man, simply through intercession or atonement? To illustrate the point, it requires a certain degree of taste to enjoy the sweetness of musical tunes. The faculty is there in each one of us, but it needs training. He alone is capable of appreciating the various strains, who has actually cultivated his musical faculty. No amount of intercessions, sacrifices or atonements can avail him a jot to enjoy a musical master-piece. Are not similar theories of salvation, as met with in the Church or other superstitious forms of creeds, equally absurd? Thus, in this life as well as in that to come, there is but one ladder with which to scale the celestial summits of salvation—ACTION.

I would crave the readers's indulgence for my digression, as it may appear, from the topic in hand. The object in view is to point out the various misconceptions that have tended to sap the Muslim's WILL-TO-ACTION; which, in turn has been responsible for his present downfall. But irrelevant as the discussion of Church dogmas may seem, it has a direct bearing on our problem. Whatever absurdities of the Christian dogmas I have exposed, are in fact, the same, every whit the same, which the Muslims have adopted, so far as their practical life goes. I would ask the Muslim reader of these pages to ponder over the state of Muslim society in general and see for

himself how badly they lack in this all-important quality—WILL-TO-ACTION. And what is this the result of?—the same superstitious forms of beliefs. Whereas Christians have confined these absurdities to the four walls of their churches and chapels, Muslims have carried them into practice in their work-a-day life. Muslims must remember that they will never be able to hold their own in this struggle of life, as a living throbbing nation, so long as they do not cultivate the power of self-reliance, so long as they do not look up to their own God-given powers for their success, so long as they do not shake off the accursed habit of dependence upon others. Let them hold their reins in their own hands and make their own way, if they must yet save themselves from extinction. The doctrine of Unity, let them realize, was not taught them, that they might raise mortals like themselves to Divine pedestals. Polytheism does no harm to God, nor does it excite His jealousy. God is self-sufficient. It is for our own good that we are enjoined to show allegiance to but One God. It is intended to teach us the practical lesson of life that we should, in no case, depend upon any besides God for help. We must use our own powers in the realization of what we foolishly expect the *Pir* or *Fakir* to do for us. *Pir*-worship and tomb-worship has been forbidden, not because these good people, alive or dead, are not worthy of veneration, but that you may learn to look to the powers within you for the attainment of your ends. In imploring them to do something on your

behalf, you weaken your own WILL-TO-ACTION. These are the questions that I leave over for discussion in a separate volume—the Secret of Divine Unity. Suffice it to point out here that though *Pir*-worship is fortunately on the wane, neighbour-worship is unfortunately, fast taking its place. We are looking up to our neighbour-communities for help and guidance. We readily take to dancing to their wire-pulling but never worry as to the evils responsible for paralysing our faculties. Are we capable of standing on our own legs? If not, we are doomed to bondage—whether English or Hindu, makes little difference. I am in no way against Hindu-Muslim Unity, and how could I afford to be? The Holy Qur-án positively enjoins co-operation with non-Muslims in a common cause. Hindu-Muslim Unity is quite in accord with the purport of Islamic Law. The question is what are we, by ourselves, capable of? Is our numerical strength—between eighty to a hundred million—insignificant? Eighty million is a gigantic force; why should we look up to others for inspiration? Eight hundred, nay, eighty devoted men can, and did, work miracles in the world. Have you not heard of the Prophet's saying that only forty true believers, united together, can shake a whole world? We are, in India alone, eighty millions; what cause for anxiety; then? But the question is, whether we are believers in the true sense of the word. If indeed, we were what we profess to be, surely, this would not have been our plight. Almighty God has withdrawn His helping hand

from us. Humiliation and degradation are hovering around us. Whatever step we take, it falls on the path to disappointment, whereas the Holy Qur-án says: "It is incumbent on Us, to help the believers". If such is the Divine promise to true believers, am I not justified in drawing but one conclusion—a conclusion, though unpalatable, yet logical. I need not, however, resort to this logic. Let me point out the line of demarcation the Holy Qur-án draws between a *Muslim* and a *Believer*. Bare profession of faith in a Divine truth makes one a *Muslim*, while living up to that truth alone can entitle him to the epithet of *Believer*. Faith in the fact that the Qur-án is a Divinely revealed Book, is enough to bring us within the fold of Islam; but just this much is not enough to raise us from the plane of a Muslim to that of a Believer, to attain which we must act up to the Qur-ánic teachings. In a word, it is our practical life, our ACTIONS that constitute all the difference. But as ill-luck would have it, this is exactly what we are lacking in. Look up the pages of the Holy Qur-án and you will find that the promise of success, of honour, of glory, of power, in brief of salvation in this life as well as in that to come, has been exclusively given to the Believers. Now, as a matter of fact, all these blessings of God have deserted us, for we have ceased to merit them they are, to-day, the lot of the non-Muslims. Are not we, then, the conclusion is forced upon us, on the authority of the Holy Qur-án, anything but Believers? The virtues of true Believers, so far as

these pertain to the development of high civilization and social life, have been adopted by non-Muslims. In other words, we Muslims have ceased to be Believers, while non-Muslims have, in effect, become so. The misfortune is that we are unaware of the true significance of FAITH and ACTION. We look upon FAITH as the indisputable property of a Muslim, and this has gone a long way to bring about our present decadence. Some of us have come to regard mere FAITH as all in all. They believe that Paradise is the exclusive privilege of a Muslim, no matter what his actions, whereas a non-Muslim, however virtuous his good deeds stands little chance of Divine favour, simply because he professes no FAITH.

What, after all, is FAITH? The adoption in practical life, of a set of right principles laid down by God, for the good of man. These principles of life are in close association with certain other truths which are called the doctrines of faith, in religious phraseology. It is therefore true that actions in order to be right, must have a right doctrine for their basis. But the converse of the proposition may not be true. In other words, it does not follow that right doctrines must result in right actions. For instance, the Holy Qur-án has laid down certain principles with which is bound up the success of man. But the fact that the Qur-án is a Book from God, is a matter of doctrine, which goes to strengthen our WILL-TO-ACTION. But so far as success is concerned, it depends wholly and solely on carrying out into practice the principles

appropriate to a particular end. Acting-up-to-principles and success are inter-dependent, bound to each other in the immutable chain of cause and effect. If a man does not believe in the Divine Source of the Holy Qur-án, it is a doctrinal error. But should he take up the Qur-ánic principles of social life and civilization and make them the rules of his conduct, he is bound to reap the corresponding fruit of success. On the contrary, the lip-profession of faith in the Divine Origin of the Holy Qur-án on the part of one who does not regulate his practical life in accordance with the principles laid down therein, is worthless trash. His so-called FAITH will do him no good. He will never meet with success. To explain the point, from the sphere of physical experience, there are numbers of people in India who view Western pharmacology with distrust, while on the other hand, there are also those who have faith in the efficacy of such medicines. Now, supposing one of the former, when down with high fever, takes quinine, while another of the latter class does not even touch the drug when feverish, is it conceivable that difference in point of faith should in any way influence the consequence? No, the result must be the direct outcome of their respective actions. The former will get rid of fever, notwithstanding his distrust of Western medicine, while the latter's faith in the efficacy of the same will avail him little. Herein lies a lesson for Muslims to take to heart. A Hindu, a Jew, a Christian, nay, even an Atheist will prosper in the world if

he acts on the Qur-ánic principle of economy: "Eat, drink, but do not exceed the limit"; while a Muslim, should he disregard the law of "do not exceed the limit", must burn in the fire of penury, despite his loud-trumpeted Faith in the Holy Qur-án.

The fact that a non-Muslim looks upon these principles as human, and not divine, makes little difference, so far as the result is concerned. A Muslim accepts them as Divine, but belies his profession in practice. Thus, for all practical purposes, a non-Muslim becomes a Believer, whereas a so-called Muslim is a Non-Believer; inasmuch as the one acts up to the Qur-ánic teaching, and the other does not. This is the true relation between FAITH and ACTION. A Muslim never tires of exulting in the thought, that of all the world, his doctrines are the true doctrines. Do whatever good others may, their deeds will bring them no good, because of their wrong doctrines. As regards himself, FAITH is all-sufficient, to ensure him the gifts of God. Works may or may not. The notion, absurd as it is on the very face of it, is against the purport of the Qur-ánic teachings. Doctrines, according to the Holy Qur-án are like a seedling that cannot grow into a plant or a tree unless properly tended with the water of deeds. Wherever the Holy Qur-án speaks of *Jannat* (gardens), without fail, it also makes mention of *Tahtih-il-Anhar* (underneath them flow streams). The simile eloquently points to the close relation between FAITH and ACTION. The one is compared to a plant; the other stands to it in the relation

of a stream of water, but for which it cannot grow and thrive. However good the seed, it will die out while yet in the earth, unless duly watered. On the other hand, should a lower order of plant be grafted with a higher one and properly watered, it will bear the higher quality of fruit. Likewise in the case of man, however bad in origin, he turns good in a good society and *vice versa.* Take the case of any non-Muslim. He may be an arch-enemy of Islam, yet if he has attained prosperity and success of any form, you will find on scrutinizing his rules of conduct, that these are one and all traceable to the principles of life inculcated in the pages of the Holy Qur-án. He may or may not be conscious of the fact; he may not own allegiance to this source. So far as worldly success is concerned, it is enough that he follows them in his daily life. Let not the Muslims labour under the false impression that all worldly things must be discarded. This is no virtue, as he seems to think. "Who has forbidden the good things of the world which Allah has made for His servants?" This is the verdict of the Holy Qur-án on the point. Worldly success has been spoken of as a blessing from God. Of course, it falls only to the lot of those who are, as the verse says, "His servants" —those who follow the path chalked out by Him for human guidance. It is an impotent consolation to think that worldly gains are not worth having and that we must regard them as forbidden. But the fact, yes, the grim fact is, that God has deprived su of these blessings; for we have given up the

path of ACTION. Europe owes all that is good and noble in its civilization, to her adoption of the true principles which were first expounded by the Holy Qur-án. She may be ignorant of the beauties of this Divine Book of Wisdom and may consequently be antagonistic to it. Nevertheless, she has taken hold of some of its truths, given them effect in practical life and has thus become the mistress of a great civilization.

On platforms, we cry ourselves hoarse to establish that European civilization is a mere gleaning from things Islamic. Muslims explored the regions of science and art when Europe was sunk deep in ignorance. Is it not a thousand pities that we should be so loud in eulogizing the greatness of our fore-fathers but seldom give a moment's thought to what made them great? What we fail to see, and what we ought to see, is the fact that the Holy Qur-án gave the world a set of rules to regulate human conduct. It promulgated certain truths which gave an impetus to the dormant mental forces of man. This resulted in expanding the sphere of human activities to a vast realm of the Universe, thereby enlarging the stock of human acquisitions. The mysteries of nature were gradually discovered, which are known as "modern sciences". For a few centuries we kept walking in the light of these truths and in the shortest period of time that history records, we became the builders of a MIGHTY ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION. Abundance of riches and possessions, however, gave birth,

in us, to the cancer of sensual indulgence. We lost hold of those truths. And the inevitable has happened. We find ourselves, as we are, beset with hardships, visited with calamities and vainly groping in the dark for an outlet. Europe, on the other hand, took to those same Qur-ánic truths. She abandoned the mode of life preached by Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount; for it led them to poverty and starvation. And what was the result? She became the mistress of the good and felicity that had been promised in the Holy Qur-án, to Muslims. To say that the builders of Modern Civilization never drew upon the Holy Qur-án for the various principles whereon they based it, is a betrayal of utter ignorance of the various stages of social evolution. It is a fact admitted on all hands among sociological experts that through some inexplicable mysterious ways, truths discovered in one locality, travel far and wide to other countries and are adopted as the code of life there. I have only to show —and I intend discussing the problem in a separate volume, as already observed—that whatever principles underlie a particular branch of this civilization, were first given to the world by the Holy Qur-án, and the conclusion will follow as a matter of course, that the blessing has sprung up through the Qur-ánic truths. In this connection, I would like to briefly touch upon a misunderstanding which has on the one hand thrown the Muslim mind into a state of despondency, and afforded, on the other, an oc-

casion to the critics of Islam to hurl an unmerited taunt at the faith. If the Holy Qur-án is the source of all progress and civilization, they argue, why are Muslims in such a state of degradation? Why, they ask, should fortune smile on those who are the opponents of the Book? The misconception has already been discussed in the foregoing pages. To recapitulate the same, briefly. The Qur-ánic truths are not restricted to some particular clan or clime. They are intended for the whole of mankind. Previous creeds were adapted to the requirements of particular races and countries and thus their teachings lost their efficacy outside the specific limits of space and time for which they were meant. But this is not the case with the Qur-ánic teachings, which are not confined to any geographical, racial or time limits. They are the common heritage of the whole of mankind. Their gates are ever wide open for all alike. Everybody is welcome to avail of them, follow them and reap the rich harvast. The people now known as Muslims, acted up to the Qur-ánic code of life, a few centuries ago, and won the laurels of success in every walk. Now, however, they have turned their backs on the Qur-án and hence the inevitable loss of power and prestige. In their stead, some other people, though seemingly hostile to Islam regulated their life in accordance with the Qur-ánic laws and consequently won ascendancy over the so-called Muslims. Thirteen centuries have elapsed since

the inauguration of the Heavenly Kingdom for which Jesus had been fervently praying. Its charter was given to mankind in the shape of the Holy Qur-án. Muslims made it the guiding code of their everyday life and became the masters of the world. Their progeny, however, laboured under the misconception that the Heavenly Kingdom was their exclusive heritage and would for ever remain in their possesion. They little realized that Divine Charters recognize no such law of inheritance. "Verily, the most honourable among you in the eyes of God, is the most God-fearing among you." No right of inheritance is admissible in this Kingdom of Heaven. ACTION alone carries weight. If inheritance were the law observed in the award of Divine favours, the wild Arabs would have been the last of all people to deserve world-mastery. Certain principles of this Divine Charter, pertaining to the art of ruling, were adopted by Christian nations and in that respect they became the heirs to that Heavenly Kingdom. In short, the fact is, that the Holy Qur-án can not be held responsible for the decadence of those who profess to follow it. It is a code of life and whosoever should follow it, must achieve success. We ought to see whether those who have superseded Muslims do or do not observe the Qur-ánic laws in their practical life. If they do, it is surely the triumph of the Divine Book. Nevertheless, it is exceedingly deplorable that Islam and the Holy Qur-án should achieve triumph only at the hands

of their enemies, while those professing faith in it, should wallow in the mire of misery and ignominy.

Our despondency to-day, knows no bounds. The world believes we are playing a losing game. Our enemies have even numbered our days. With them our doom is sealed. Plans are being matured, as in the case of the Iberian Peninsula, though in a different manner, to obliterate the very traces of our past grandeur in Palestine, Syria, Smyrna and Armenia. What is extremely surprising, however, is the fact that in the case of Spain, Europe was the most backward of the whole world. Thick ignorance was enshrouding it all over. But to-day, she boasts of her greatness in the domain of science and learning. To-day she is loudly trumpeting her humanitarianism. The recent Great War, it is claimed, was undertaken to champion the cause of the weak against a stronger aggressor, the cause of right against might. All this, however, is hollow talk. Commercialism was the sole cause of the war. If the preservation of the smaller nations was the motive, as alleged, why is every nerve strained to bring about the extinction of the Ottoman Empire? Czecho-Slovaks and Bulgars, admittedly the enemies of civilization, are reinstated in their original homelands, but the Turk must be wiped off. Were not these people equally a party to the war? Why then, this differentiative treatment of the Turk? In vain did Mr. Muhammad Ali visit these shores with his Khilafat Delegation to

knock at the British Cabinet's door of justice. What was at last done, was every bit premeditated and one could see it long before, as a foregone conclusion. The fact is that the luxurious and self-indulgent ways of life in Europe called for more wealth. Each of the various nations was anxious to shove off its economic burden on to others' shoulders and the distribution of this much-coveted wealth led to the world-wide conflagration of war.

The fact that the blessings of *Rahman* shower indiscriminately upon all and that it requires a man of action to turn them to further use, is indeed the happiest of things for man. This, in fact, is the very essence of the GOSPEL OF ACTION. Before setting his hand to any piece of work, man needs assurance as to two points—whether he possesses the requisite material whereon to expend his energy and whether his labour will bear fruit. *Bismillah-irrahman-irrahim,* i. e. In the Name of *Allah,* the *Rahman* and the *Rahim,* which every Muslim is enjoined upon to repeat before starting to do anything, furnishes the necessary assurance. The material, it tells us, has already been supplied, even before our particular need came into being, by the *Rahman* and that our labours would be rewarded manifold by *Rahim,* whose aid we invariably invoke every time we begin doing something. What an encouraging thought! I can long for nothing but the material for the same already exists and all I need do is to exert myself to win the laurels

of success. What a force this to breathe a fresh life even into a dead soul!

This new truth expounded by Islam, if deeply looked into, is pregnant with a great promise for the weal of man. Every kind of progress, every form of scientific discovery or achievement receives an impetus from this conception. Whatever needs I have to meet, whatever yearnings I have to satisfy, whether, I long to be able to fly in the air, or travel under water or talk at a distance of thousands of miles, in short, each and everything that my imagination can possibly think of, is within our reach. Nature has already produced the necessary means. I have only to bring them together to achieve the object of my desire. Of course, it is for me to find those means out, be they on the earth or in the heavens. As soon as I take one step towards procuring these, *Rahim* will advance ten steps towards me, with His hand of help. Modern science is but another name for these very discoveries. This is not a mere assertion on my part. The Qur-án gives you exactly the same happy tiding; "Whatever you ask of God, He will surely give you". Thus you may ask for anything, unless expressly forbidden in the Book, and you shall have it too. But mind you! These achievements are not the figments of idle fancy, nor will you acquire them, by virtue of your incantations, from underneath your pillow. The key of success has also been supplied in the preceding portion of the same verse which says

that God has made Heaven and Earth and whatever is contained therein subservient to you; but it is for you to put them to whatever service you will. The servants are there, just awaiting the hand of the master to direct them.

Early Muslims rose with this faith glowing in their hearts and during the shortest period in world-history, which they devoted to material science, they became the builders of a mighty civilization. Before the advent of Islam, the human outlook was confined to the study of purely speculative sciences such as logic, psychology, ethics, and metapysics. The material universe received little attention. But no sooner did the sun of Islam dawn than all forms of material sciences cropped up. This was due to this new truth which Islam came to promulgate—the GOSPEL OF ACTION. ACTION became the sole guarantee for our felicity, our comfort, our honour, our glory and what not. It is doubtless true that everything is the outcome of Divine Grace, but ACTION is the only thing wherewith to bring that grace into operation.

But here we must guard against another extreme, no less evil. If inaction is a curse, it is a greater curse to look up to action, and action alone as the ultimate cause of our success. Truth lies neither at the one extreme nor at the other; but midway at the golden mean. Action-worship gradually leads to atheism, dispensing with the necessity of the Divine hand in our achievements. This is the curse under which the West is la-

bouring to-day. They never think for a moment that no art, no industry is possible unless Divine Grace should provide the necessary materials, but for which we cannot move one step. And obviously, all such materials we owe purely to Divine Grace. They are not the fruits of our own labour. ACTION may be all in all, so far as our achievements are concerned, but does not every action presuppose the existence of a Deity, Who should provide out of His mere grace, the indispensable material? Thus a man with a sound mind does not bow to the idol of his own creation —his own action—but to the Beneficent Lord Who has given him the power to act as well as the material to act upon.

CHAPTER III.

THE NEW EPIPHANY—ISLAM—CHRISTIANITY.

"Do not slacken nor grieve; for you are the triumphant ones, provided you are believers."—THE HOLY QUR-ÁN.

HEREIN lies a soothing consolation for a true believer in the Holy Book, most cheering tidings for a Muslim. Should we turn a new leaf this very day, shake our slumber off, make the best use of our time, energies, and whatever money we still possess, this very day shall fortune strew roses on our way. Wealth, power, pomp and glory shall follow like a shadow in the wake of our ACTION. Whereas the Holy Qur-án speaks of the Divine attributes which were known to the world even before the advent of Islam, it also introduces quite a new conception of God. The world looked upon the Divine Being as merciful, but was utterly ignorant of a particular form of His mercy known as *rahmaniyyat* in Islamic phraseology. This is how this attribute of God, for the first time expounded by Islam, manifests itself: A certain man is anxious to achieve a particular object, but does not possess the necessary material—the means wherewith to attain his goal. He is at a loss what to do, but does not keep listless. He exerts himself, and as soon as he takes the first step in that direc-

tion, Divine mercy comes to his succour, providing the requisite means. As he moves on towards his goal, the Divine Hand at every stage brings him the needful. This is the working of the Divine attribute *rahmaniayyt*—attribute that comes to the help of the MAN OF ACTION. The first step must be taken by man himself, in order to deserve the manifestation of this attribute. No matter whatever our lack of means and resources, the RAHMAN guarantees the supply of everything necessary, *provided* we take a firm stand on the field of ACTION, move about our limbs and keep up and doing. The Holy Qur-án has laid the world under a deep debt of obligation by declaring God to be RAHMAN—the Provider of material to the man of action. This new thought, this fresh outlook on God's ways, has given a great impetus to man's powers. According to this new philosophy of life, man's POWER OF ACTION is his sole capital. It comes to cheer up the idle pessimist, urges him to be up and make use of his God-given powers, which he possesses as surely as anybody else, and the hand of RAHMAN will itself crown his efforts with success.

Christian theology has also a New Epiphany to boast of. Islamic *rahmaniyyat* connotes the mercy of God, which showers on man, not as a reward that he has earned, but as a spontaneous blessing. But Christianity knows no such unearned mercy, especially when there is the demand of justice to be satisfied. In such cases God must first

arrange to meet the requirements of justice and then manifest His mercy. This novel idea of God was not revealed to Jesus. Nor is it traceable in the Acts of the Apostles. It finds, no doubt, a dim reflection in the writings of the semi-philosopher and semi-Rabbi, Paul, who, in fact, is the real founder of so-called Christianity. This new conception of the Divine Being, that His mercy cannot be shown without compensation, was really invented to legalize the dogma of atonement. Adam committed sin. He as well as his children must be visited with punishment. Divine justice called for retribution. Divine mercy was, however, anxious for man's redemption. But mercy could not be exercised unless the demand of justice were satisfied. Hence God, in His love, sent His own beloved son to earth, who was crucified to atone for the sins of others. This is the whole story.

It is astonishing that such stuff should find a place in a system of theology. God, the Merciful, and exacting the price of His mercy—two irreconcilable ideas! Mercy ceases to be mercy when shown in return for something. To meet a single act on man's part with a hundredfold of reward is surely mercy; but it is no mercy to forgive a sin after retribution. Whether the penalty is paid by the offender himself or some one else on his behalf makes no difference. So far as the forgiver is concerned, he has shown no mercy, having visited the particular offence with the proportionate measure of punishment.

Nor is this Christian myth of atonement even an act of justice on the part of God. Administration of justice takes for granted the existence of two contending parties, apart from the judge, who decides between them. But where the case is between the offender and the offended, there is no occasion for the display of justice. Punishment in such cases, meted out by the latter, is not an act of justice, but of revenge. Sin is committed by man against God, punishing which would amount to avenging personal wrong, rather than justice. It is no New Epiphany, as claimed. The same story, as old as man himself—to bring about reconciliation between man and an angry Deity through sacrificial blood. The sophistical reasoning that what man owed to God the latter paid out of His own pocket, is a ludicrous attempt to disguise this pagan doctrine in a different garb. And what is the effect of such a conception on the morals of man? If man must model himself after the Divine pattern, this will hardly mean an enviable addition to the moral assets of humanity. It deals a death-blow to the highest form of virtue—benevolence—which is shown without expectation of reward. The influence of this doctrinal principle on the Western mind is patent enough. It knows no such thing as doing good without return. "Give and take" is the principle on which all affairs are conducted. Small wonder that the votaries of a God incapable of good without recompense should also be deprived of this highest form of moral quality.

The mighty Epiphany which aroused the dormant powers of man's nature and brought about through the Muslims of early days a wholesale metamorphosis of human society, consists in the Divine attibute knomn as *rahmaniyyat.* Like everything else in the realm of creation, man has quite a heap of calls of nature to attend to, upon the satisfaction of which depends his welfare—nay, his very existence. But it is beyond his power to provide the means wherewith to satisfy such calls. There are some of these requirements of our nature that must be provided for, even before we come into being, or our very existence would be an impossibility. The breasts of a mother must have milk in store for the child long before its birth. Air, water, heaven and earth—in a word, the entire system of this universe as it is—must be there, before a child may take birth. The existence of all these things is an indispensable necessity for its life. The Compassionate and Merciful God has taken good care to make the necessary provision for us. But what for? Not in return for any good offices we have done Him, but merely out of His spontaneous loving grace. All this is the manifestation of the Divine attribute called *rahmaniyyat* in the Holy Qur-án.

Besides what is indispensable for our very existence, at every step in our daily life we are likewise helpless and utterly dependent upon Divine grace. Every act of ours, every movement on our part, requires the pre-existence of certain

material, beyond our power to create. What would all the skill of a carpenter or a smith avail unless God were gracious enough to have created the requisite material—wood, iron and fire—out of His mere bounty? Similarly, every art, every craft, every phase of human activities, is dependent upon some material, out of our power to create. And are not our own various limbs and joints, our hands and feet, our head and heart, the different manifestations of which are known as various arts, the unearned grace of God? These blessings of God, that come spontaneously, know no distinction of caste, creed, colour or clime. Those, however, which come to us as the product of our own labours—and these also are rewarded with tenfold of what is our due or hundredfold or even more—are, according to Islamic classification of Divine Attributes, the manifestation of *rahimiyyat*. Traditions have brought down a report from the Holy Prophet saying that Divine *rahmaniyyat* showers its blessings on all alike, irrespective of any distinctions. whereas His *rahimiyyat* is exclusive in its bounty to the believers. This embodies a great truth which, unfortunately, Muslims have failed to realize. They have put upon it an interpretation which has led all the more to their ruin. This is how they construe it: "We are the chosen of God, His favourites. Let these non-believers enjoy this short-lived earthly life; we will have the next life all to ourselves. Let them avail of Divine *rahmaniyyat* here, but when the time comes for

the exercise of His *rahimiyyat* they will be pushed off. Every bliss will then be reserved exclusively for the believers." So far, so good. The manifestation ef *rahimiyyat* has no doubt been limited to the believer. But who is a believer? Surely not one who merely professes to be so. A true believer is a MAN OF ACTION. Let the Muslim think within himself—the so-called Muslim—if, according to this definition, he can find a place under the category of believers. Has he not heard of another saying equally true: "Whosoever is blind in this life, he shall be blind in the life to come—nay, even more misguided"?

The motive underlying this New Islamic Epiphany was to rescue man from the slough of despondency, for lack of means to get out. Should he care to enter the field of ACTION, want of requisite material may not stand in his way. For this reason, the Book of God, as well as every chapter contained therein, opens with the words: "In the name of Allah, the RAHMAN and the RAHIM." For this very reason have we been enjoined to recite the same every time we set our hand to something. It is intended to impress on man, thereby, that whatever his requirements, RAHMAN has already created them out of His grace. These, however, can only be turned to account after he has brought his own powers into play. Grain, for instance, is a necessity of our life, for the production of which we stand in need of the co-operation of every atom in the universe. The earth, the sun, the moon, air, water, clouds—in

brief, every element of Nature—must be subservient to us, or we cannot grow a single grain. The RAHMAN has, in His infinite grace, provided us with all these servants for nothing, but these God-given labourers refuse to render us any service until and unless we have taken the first step and brought one of our own faculties into operation. After we have ploughed the soil and sown the seed do all these agencies of Nature set to discharge their assigned functions? The initiatory step must be our own, in order to set this Divine machinery into motion. This is the significance of the report from the Prophet which says that God advances ten steps towards the man who takes but one step towards Him. In other words, Divine blessings are impatient to meet us more than half-way, should we take but one step to receive them. Thus the RAHMAN has given us the necessary material and capacity wherewith to deserve and attract His blessings as RAHIM.

The numerous objects in nature are endowed with properties adapted to the satisfaction of our needs, long before the latter actually arise. Our business is simply to discover them, which process is technically known as Science. Does it not point to the existence of a Higher Being that has taken care to provide for our needs beforehand? This Higher Power is known as *Rahman* in the Qur-ánic terminology. Shortsighted as man is, he is awe-struck at the achievements of the Power of Action, and bows before Science. But

the man of action can see the Real underneath the phenomenal. He perceives the hand of *Rahman* at Work behind the Scenes. At every step in the field of action, he finds that the object upon which he brings his labour and exertion to bear, is not the product of his own action, but has been created long before by some Unseen Hand. A man of insight feels grateful to this Invisible Power that has provided all this material beforehand but for which no action would have been possible. And the truth is that one cannot properly realize the necessity of a Supreme Power, but through the problem of Action.

Now as to the manifestation of the Divine Attribute—*rahimiyyat.* This is also best perceived by the man of action through reflection on the fruits of his labours. With a materialist, a particular action must result in just the corresponding measure of reward. He is not in a position to understand how an action can bear a tenfold or even more of fruit. Consequently where results rest purely in human hands, they come in just the same measure as the actions. But where the agencies of nature are involved, the fruit is always manifold to the labour. A human machine will bring out exactly the same number that is put therein. But a machine of nature, for instance, the earth, will return, a single grain put in it, a hundred-fold. Should you want to water a place exclusively through human hands, the provision of water will be in strict proportion to the amount of labour; the more the number

of water-carriers, the more the quantity of water. But if you trust to the water-carriers of nature, having done your part in planting trees in sufficient number, what is the reward you receive? Surely it is out of all proportion to your labour. The plantation converts clouds into rain and in just half an hour you have an over-flow of water. This is the manifestation of the Divine Attribute of *rahimiyyat*, which only a man of action can duly appreciate. The immediate cause is no doubt a move on his own part, but to meet it with a manifold return, is the part of an Unseen Hand, which ever keeps by him on the field of action. This is called *Rahimiyyat* in the Holy Qur-án, which says:—

> "There is a sign for them in the dead earth which We vivified and brought forth from it grains of which you eat. Also We made therein gardens of dates and grapes and caused to flow springs of water in it, so that they may eat of its fruits. And all this was not the work of their hands; why then are they not grateful"?

What a beautiful parable! On the one hand it inculcates respect for action, on the other, it opens the eyes of the man of action that his own labour is not the sole cause of the fruits he enjoys. Unless he were all along assisted by the Divine Hand, first as *Rahman* in supplying him with the requisite material to work upon and then as *Rahim* to bring his labour to fruition, he would have been absolutely helpless. The initi-

ative, of course, must be taken by him. He must make the right use of the gifts of *rahmaniyyat,* in order to deserve the showers of *rahimiyyat.*

But what, it may be asked, is the true significance of the word action as used in these pages? Unfortunately we are living in an age when the Muslim world is day by day growing more ignorant of the true meaning of everything pertaining to religion. The word action is taken now-a-days to imply observance of a set of rituals. One who is regular at his prayers, keeps fast, has performed the pilgrimage to the Ka'ba and recites the Holy Qur-án, is regarded as a man of action, no matter how corrupt his daily practical life. On the other hand, one who neglects these religious observances is denounced as a man of bad actions. It is really unfortunate thus to limit the significance of the word to which the Holy Qur-án repeatedly invites our attention. Repetition of the formula of Faith, prayer, fasting, pilgrimage and poor-rate are no doubt the main factors of Islam, but they do not constitute the whole of Islam. These are the pillars, so to speak, of the edifice known as Islam. No doubt, there could be no building without pillars, but do pillars by themselves, ever make up the building? If you want to construct a building on a piece of land and content yourself just with erecting a few pillars, would you call it a building? Nay, even these pillars will not long withstand the wear and tear of time, unless protected by the completion of the building. Similarly, it is our

actions in our work-a-day life that constitute the building of Islam and not merely the various observances.

There is another general misconception which must be instantaneously removed. It is believed that worldly good and glory are things forbidden to a Muslim, undesirable in the eyes of the Lord. But the idea is absolutely erroneous and against the teachings of the Holy Qur-án which says: "Who has forbidden the decoration which Allah has created for His servants?" Such a notion defeats the very purpose of Divine revelation, which has ever come for the *falah* (Success) of man, as says the Holy Qur-án: "These are they who are on the right path from their Lord and these are they who have achieved *falah*." From Adam down to the Prophet Muhammad, Divine Revelation has been bestowed on man for the express object that man may achieve *falah*. Now as to what this word *falah* connotes. You have only to refer to any Arabic lexicon to see that it comprises every kind of good, success, bliss and happiness that can fall to the lot of man in this life as well as in the life hereafter. Again, the Holy Qur-án especially speaks of all such worldly boons as the gifts of God and His blessings, whether in the shape of kingdoms, power, business, rank or wealth. These are all the various forms of *falah*. The Holy Qur-án aims at putting you in the way to achieve all these blessings of Allah. And to tread along these very paths, as chalked out by the Book, is the true significance

of action: Prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, poor-rate and the repetition of the formula of Faith, by themselves, can not avail you to win these things. Their observance, no doubt gives you the requisite power of action wherewith to walk along the paths leading to *falah*. Let us not labour under the false impression that having duly discharged all these obligations we have done our part and *falah* will come as a matter of course, even though we should not bestir ourselves. This is an idle hope. This is just like being on the right path without moving an inch forward. The mere fact that he is on the right path will not lead him to the goal. He must walk along in order to reach it. True, we can not claim to be Muslims unless we properly fulfil these fundamental obligations, but if our action is limited to the observance of these alone, we can not claim to be *Mu'mins* (believers). A *Mu'min* is one who leaves no stone unturned to make himself a success in whatever sphere of life he is called upon to play his part. To make a living, to bring up children, to adopt ways of honesty and integrity, to cultivate high morals, to assist in the cause of righteousness, to avoid evil ways, to fulfil all obligations to others, are not all these as much Divine injunctions as the observance of fast and prayer? Is it not then a gross misconception to confine the scope of what we call action to the mere observance of these devotional practices? To be accurate, these are mere means, the end being something else. "Fast has

been enjoined upon you, as it was enjoined upon those before you, *so that you may cultivate taqwa (observance of Divine limits)*", says the Holy Qur-án. Exactly the same is the object in view in enjoining prayer, poor-rate, and pilgrimage. What an irony of fate! We have mistaken the means for the end, the path for the goal. He who looks up to others for his living, who has an eye on other's belongings, who does not care to properly bring up his children, who does not duly discharge his other responsibilities, is in no way a man of *taqwa*, even though he should regularly say his prayers and keep fast. A true *Mu'min* (believer) is the one who does his level best to bring lustre upon whatever he is called upon to accomplish, who strives to excel others by all legitimate means in whatever walk of life he finds himself placed, one who spends out of his earnings to promote the welfare of others, who devoted his faculties to the good of his fellow-beings.

Our religious gatherings, associations and sermons are conducted on the same misconceived lines. We have just a chat about prayer and fast and we think we are religious. The preachers harangue on the mysteries of Heaven and Hell or tell you how to make ablutions or perform other rituals and that is regarded as enough to make up religion. The same is the case as with our religious books. But this is quite an incorrect notion of religion. Our *Ulemas* (theologians) would do well to take up the Holy Qur-án, study the

prevailing conditions of life, and give us practical guidance in our daily life. How we should regulate our nuptials, our funerals, our dealings with others, how to flourish in business or some other calling—in fact there is no aspect of our life but the Holy Qur-án contains full guidance for the same. They should instruct us in the Qur-ánic morals, and tell us ways and means whereby to cultivate such morals. In the chapter *Almuhinun* (The Believers), for instance, the Holy Qur-án draws a beautiful picture of a perfect religious life in these words:—"Successful indeed are the believers, who are humble in their prayers, who keep aloof from what is vain, who act aiming at purification, who guard their private parts, except before their mates or those whom their right hands possess, for they surely are not blameable. But whosoever seeks to go beyond that, these are they that exceed the limits. And those that are keepers of their trusts and their covenant and those who keep a guard on their prayers; these are they who are the heirs, who shall inherit Paradise; they shall abide therein." (XXIII: 1—11.)

I would not enter into a lengthy comment on these verses. I would point out just one thing: that besides prayer and poor-rate which according to popular notion, exhaust the sphere of religion, there are some other things necessary for the attainment of Heavenly Life. And as a matter of fact, if looked into carefully, these few verses comprehend within their purview all the

civil and criminal laws of the most civilized form of government. Respect for treaties, regard for trusts, regulation of sex-relations, avoidance of absurdities, adoption of righteous ways, charity and sympathy, these are the virtues that go to make a most highly civilized society, but unfortunately, these are the very qualities that we are lacking in to-day. Here are some other verses worth consideration:—

And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve any but Him and goodness to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them (so much as) *Ugh* nor chide them, and speak to them a generous word. And make yourself submissively gentle to them with compassion, and say: O My Lord have compassion on them, as they brought me up (when I was) little. Your Lord knows what is in your minds; if you are good, then He is surely Forgiving to those who turn to Him frequently. And give to the near of kin his due and to the needy and the wayfarer, and do not squander wastefully. Surely the squanderers are the fellows of the devils, and the devil is ever ungrateful to his Lord. An if you turm away from them to seek mercy from your Lord which you hope for, speak to them a gentle word. And do not make your hand to be shackled to your neck nor stretch it forth to the utmost limit of its stretching forth, lest you should afterwards sit down blamed, stripped off. Surely your Lord makes plentiful the means of subsistence for whom He pleases and He gives according to a measure; surely He is ever Aware of, Seeing His servants. And do not kill your children for fear of poverty; We give them sustenance and yourselves too; surely to kill them is a great wrong. And go not nigh to fornication; surely it is an indecency and evil is the way. And do not kill any one whom Allah has forbidden except for a just cause, and whoever is slain unjustly, We have indeed given to his heir authority, so let him not exceed the just limits in slaying;

surely he is aided. And draw not near to the property of the orphan except in a goodly way till he attains his maturity and fulfils the promise; surely (every) promise shall be questioned about. And give full measure when you measure out, and weigh with a true balance; this is fair and better in the end. And follow not that of which you have not the knowledge; surely the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these, shall be questioned about that. And do not go about in the land exultingly; for you can not cut through the earth nor reach the mountains in height. All this—the evil of it—is hateful in the sight of your Lord. This is of what your Lord has revealed to you of wisdom, and do not associate any other god with Allah, lest you should be thrown into hell, blamed, cast away. (17: 23—39.)

And the servants of the Beneficent God are they who walk on the earth in humbleness, and when the ignorant address them, they say, Peace. And they who pass the night prostrating themselves before their Lord and standing. And they who say; O our Lord turn away from us the chastisement of hell, surely the chastisement thereof is a lasting evil. Surely it is an evil abode and evil place to stay. And they who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor parsimonious, and keep between these the just mean. And they who do not call upon another god with Allah and do not slay the soul, which Allah has forbidden except in the requirements of justice, and, who do not commit fornication; and he who does this shall find a requital of sin; the chastisement shall be doubled to him on the day of resurrection, and he shall abide therein in abasement. Except him who repents and believes and does a good deed; so these are they of whom Allah changes the evil deeds to good ones; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. And whoever repents and does good, he surely turns to Allah a goodly turning. And they who do not bear witness to what is false, and when they pass by what is vain, they pass by nobly. And they who, when reminded of the communications of their Lord, do not fall down thereat, deaf and blind. And they who say; O our Lord grant to us in our wives and our offspring the joy of our eyes, and make us guides to those

that guard against evil. These shall be rewarded with high places because they were patient, and shall be met therein with greetings and salutations. (25: 63—75.)

These verses are too clear to need any comment. Every phase of life is included within the scope of religion, according to Islam. There is no aspect of our practical daily life but religion has a bearing on it. A person of culture knows what the full import of the word citizenship is. The qualities of a good citizen are, according to the Qur-ánic teachings, the common-place characteristics of a *Mu'mín* (believer). A *Mu'mín* knows no indolence, no cowardice, no despair, no despondency. A *Mu'mín* has fear of none besides Allah. In the sphere of business, a *Mu'mín* is one who spares no nerve to make his calling a thorough success, but at the same time excludes every kind of unfair means. In brief, a *Mu'mín* must do his utmost to acquit himself with credit, in any and every walk of life.

I would now briefly discuss a few erroneous notions that have largely contributed to the weakening of our Power of Action. Not only have we practically lost all such power, but what is worse, we have lost even faith in the utility of action, notwithstanding the repeated refutations of these false doctrines in the Holy Qur-án. And the reason why these anti-Islamic conceptions have crept into the Muslim society is not far to seek. The Holy Qur-án which is the one source of light has ceased to be the code of our life, so far as practice is concerned. We never consult

it for guidance in our daily life. There are quite a lot of misleading notions, but I would refer to just a few of them. In themselves, that is to say, in their true significance, they are each and all patent truths, but as misconceived by Muslims, they have sapped all our energy for action. Faith, prayer, intercession, ransom, atonement, predestination, these are the main things, a perverted notion of which has led to the ruination of the world of Islam. The problem of predestination as misunderstood is responsible for the greatest amount of mischief done. What is to happen, must happen, in spite of myself. Why at all should I exert myself? It is not possible to avert the inevitable? Such is the Muslim's frame of mind. I would take these one by one.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WRONG CONCEPTION OF FAITH.

FROM the Qur-ánic point of view, Faith does not consist in the mere acceptance of a set of truths. Action is the indispensable complement of Faith. Right action must no doubt, inseparably accompany right principles, but the wrong principles of some one in no way spoil his good actions. An atheist, for instance must reap the fruits of his truthfulness, in spite of his wrong doctrine, while a believer in the existence of God and in the Devine origin of the Qur-án, shall in no wise evade the curse of telling a lie, notwithstanding the correctness of his doctrines. "Whosoever should do just a particle of good", says the Holy Qur-án, "He shall have the reward of it, and whosoever should do just a particle of evil, he shall suffer the consequence thereof". This is an immutable law laid down by the Holy Book, without any qualifying clauses to secure exceptions in certain cases. It is applicable to all alike, irrespective of considerations of belief. To look upon the correctness of doctrines as all in all, is in fact, the Christian point of view. With the Church, mere faith is enough to attain salvation. But from the Islamic view-point, Faith without action, carries no value. No doubt, the Holy Qur-án speaks sometimes of the fruitless-

ness of the non-believer's actions, but it is wrong to draw from it, the general inference, that whatever good a non-believer might do, it is worthless trash. The particular actions which will go to waste, have been clearly specified. The reference there is only to such of their attempts as were made for the destruction of Islam. It was simply by way of a prophecy to console Muslims that whatever the non-believers' schemes and conspiracies against Islam, they shall come to naught.

There is another serious misconception, which is in fact an offshoot of the same wrong notion of Faith. Religion and life are regarded as two distinct spheres, having nothing to do with each other. Among Christians, religion consists in the profession of a few dogmas, observance of a few rituals, such as attendance at the Church every Sunday, partaking of the Lord's supper and so forth. This exhausts the scope of religion, which has no business to interfere with the daily life outside the four walls of the Church and the Chapel. The same is the case, to a great extent, with the Hindu temples. So long as Christendom was devoted heart and soul to religion, it could make no progress in worldly affairs. In the Middle Ages, when religious zeal was prevailing over Europe, we find the continent devoid of anything of the nature of civilization and worldly progress. It was only when it bade farewell to religion and appropriated Muslim ways of social progress, that it attained to the position it enjoys to-day. Now, the Christian world has drawn

a line between the religious and the temporal, each being thoroughly exclusive of the other. According to this new conception, one has only to observe the various prescribed ceremonials within the Church, in order to attain his spiritual salvation, whereas to achieve success in this earthly life, he must adopt the ways and means, appropriate to the end in view. Religion has nothing to do with it. To gain our worldly ends, we might employ any means, fair or foul, without being in any way violating the dictates of religion, which is confined only to the Church precincts. The moral iniquities such a principle of life must inevitably lead to, need no telling. Usurpation of other's rights, oppression, injustice absolutism and a hundred and one such evils, must crop up like mushrooms, as a natural sequence to such a course. Thus, European progress dates from the time when religion was detached from work-a-day life. And it could not be otherwise, for the Church doctrines are one and all calculated to sap all energy for activity, tending to bring about lassitude and inertia. Faith is considered all in all; action counting for nothing. Such a view of life, could surely give no impetus to action and struggle, with which is bound up all progress. Hence, it was only when religion and life were divorced from each other, that the era of European progress dawned.

But Islam brought quite a different outlook on life. It removed this fundamental mistake of the isolation of the Church from daily life. It gave, no

doubt, the foremost place to religion in human concerns; but at the same time, it expanded the sphere of religion to make it co-extensive with the highest form of civilized life. Work-a-day life, in its numerous details was made to form the very basis of religion. According to Islam, there could be no religion apart from practical daily life. The object was, that the Muslims should not underestimate what is popularly called worldly life and thus get pushed to the wall in the struggle of life. But in imbuing every item of our daily life, with a religious tinge, it made sure that no unfair means should be employed in the achievement of our objects. Thus, while on the one hand, this conception of religion-in-life, as promulgated by Islam, ensured the Muslims' security against poverty and misery, it safeguarded, on the other, that in the pursuit of their temporal ends, they must keep within religious bounds, in no way encroaching upon others' rights. But, as ill-luck would have it, we also came, as time rolled by, to look upon religion as something distinct from daily life. Nevertheless, the superiority of the former over the latter, retained a firm hold on our minds. Thus we discarded and despised sordid worldly life, as unworthy of serious attention. Religion, we thought, must have the best of our attention. But the newly-conceived notion of religion— religion divorced from practical life—was anything but religion. Thus, while losing the world, under the false impression that it was anti-religious, and as such, not worth having, we were equally deprived

of realizing our religion; for what we took for religion, was the mere observance, like Christians and others, of a few empty rituals. If such was to be our conception of religion, it would have been better had we, like others, taken to the pursuit of temporal things. In that case, we should have got at least something—the comforts of this life. But, discarding life as base and mean, and striving after this self-conceived form of religion, we got neither the one nor the other. How unfortunate! Islam came to teach us that this world and religion were one and the same thing, but in blind imitation of others, we committed the same mistake as others before us. In fact, Islam came to tell us that this worldly life is the *Mazra'* (tillage) for the life to come.

If Faith, by itself were all in all, the Holy Prophet would not have impressed the necessity of Action, on his own daughter Fatima. Again, who could claim a Faith, stronger than that of the Prophet? Nevertheless, he would leave no stone unturned in order to achieve a desired end. Whatever the object before him, he would spare no nerve to do all in his power to gain it. Was not Faith alone, enough to bring him success? The Prophet's life is, in fact, a beacon-light, pointing us the way to the haven of success. His life is a sublime *example of success.* Let us for a moment, trace his foot-prints, and see what was the course of his life. He was the beloved of God, with an unshakeable faith in Allah, ever submissive to His Will, all through the ups and

downs of his variegated life. He received the happy tidings beforehand, that he would triumph over his enemies. And Who gave this promise? The Lord on High, of Whose Word, it is written, that the earth and heaven shall pass away, but the Word of God can not pass away. At the very outset of his career as a Prophet, God tells him: "We have exalted for you, your name", a prophecy, put in the past tense, to emphasize that being a Divine decree, it is inevitable to come about. His enemies, he is informed, would perish in their futile attempts to extirpate Islam. His religion would spread far and wide, all over the world. In brief, he receives the promise of every kind of good and bliss from the Lord. What then is the necessity for him to exert himself? He has been told that the enemy chiefs would fall and the rank and file would be routed. Why at all should he bother to take the field against the enemy? Has he no faith in the Divine Promise? He ought, from the modern so-called Muslim's standpoint, simply to have repeated this Divine Promise on his string of beads and quietly awaited the fulfilment. But what does he do? He fills the soil of the battle-field with torrents of Muslim blood. He makes every preparation for war. "God will surely save you from the people", is another Divine promise. Yet he takes good care to shield his person with armour, properly equips himself with arms and draws up his men in right battle array. Leaving aside the Divine promises concerning triumph on the battle-

fields, he had many other promises from the Lord. But in no case did he spare any pains on his own part, to bring about the fulfilment of the same. Thus, his example shows us the way to success in clear relief. We must, by our self-exertion, prove to God, that so far as we are concerned, we have done our level best, and then look forward to Divine help to take us by the hand and lead us on to the summit of success. Prophecies are simply intended to strengthen our conviction in the final triumph of truth and thereby strengthen our Power of Action. Moses had also, a promise from the Lord—the conquest of the Holy Land. But he was never destined to witness the fulfilment of that Divine promise. He never came in possession of the Promised Land. The reason was, that his people, like the present-day Muslims, shirked the pains of self-exertion. When confronted by obstacles, they said "Here we are sitting. Let Moses and his God go on to conquer". Thus, they failed to perform their part of the promise—action—and God, therefore, had to withhold His part—fulfilment—for a period of forty years, when a nation of FAITH-IN-ACTION, was born, and a manly generation under the leadership of Joshua, obtained possession of the Holy Land. Had the same been the condition of the early Muslims, they would not have dazzled the world with their achievements. But, unlike the followers of Moses, as also unlike us, the Muslims of today, they were a race of a higher mould. What was their responce, when

the Prophet called upon them to come out for the defence of the Faith. "We are not like the companions of Moses", they said, "so as to shrink from danger and ask you, 'Go ye and your Lord to the battle'; we will stand by you and fight to the last man". This was not an empty promise. It saw its literal fulfilment on the field of Uhad, when a human wall was drawn up round the Prophet's person, to defend it against the hot attacks of assailants from all sides. It was a scene of unsurpassed chivalry and devotion.

Have you ever pondered over why God has made mention of these incidents? Did he mean to amuse us with the tales of the past? No, in narrating the attitudes of the followers of both Moses and Muhammad, the object was to invite our attention to some lessons of vital moment to us. Both were Prophets from the Lord. Both have been spoken of as resembling each other. Both received a Divine promise of ultimate triumph over their enemies. Both were men of action. But the promise found fulfilment in the one case and was postponed in the other. What was the reason? Obviously enough, their respective followers were responsible for success in the one case and faliure in the other. ACTION, on the part of the followers of Muhammad, and INACTION on that of Moses, brought about different results.

Even to-day, when the entire Islamic horizon is overcast with thick clouds of despair and despondency, there is a great Divine Promise

of success, awaiting fulfilment. The Holy Prophet has forewarned us that with the predominance of Gog and Magog, who will spring up from every corner to annihilate Islam, will dawn, once more, the era of Islamic glory. To whatever school of Muslim thought you may belong end whatever your interpretation of the terms Gog and Magog, whatever your conception of the appearance of a *Mahdi* and the descent of a Messiah, one fact is patent on all hands—the general decadence of Muslims all over the world and the predominance of Christian nations. Can you point to any part of the world where the relative positions of Muslims and Christians are otherwise. Thus, the time of Islamic regeneration has come, but the fulfilment is bound up with the same immutable condition as in the case of the promises to Moses and Muhammad. Success is only at arm's length from us, smiling in our face, but it would not come to us of itself. We must move ourselves to reach it and it will embrace us with open arms.

Bear in mind! INACTION is another name for lifelessness. All good consists in motion. In my judgment, Gog and Magog are but two forms of absolutism, known before the War, as the Czarism of Russia and the militarism of Germany. Some sacred Scriptures plainly speak of Russia as Gog, while some thinkers identify the Magog with the Germans. As a matter of fact, Gog, Magog and Antichrist are the various names for some features of temporal governments,

met with more or less, in every form of existing government. To be plain, Anti-Christism is another name for diplomacy. If duplicity in dealing with others—saying one thing to mean another, and purposely using expressions, capable of double interpretation, in time of need—is the significance of diplomacy, Anti-Christism also amounts to the same. But the day of such a system of rule is over. Whatever the future governments, to whichever nationality they may belong, they will be based on Islamic principles. It will, however, be our duty to bring to the notice of such nations, that in practice, they are already Muslims.

Even to-day, the Western world has, to a large extent, formulated, though unconsciously, its social, moral and administrative systems after the teachings of Islam. Materialism, which had its day so far has also received a crushing blow during the Great War, which has opened the eyes of the West to the curse of their self-centred greed. Waves of spiritualism have already set in, perceptibly agitating the Western mind. But it is for Muslims to avail themselves of the opportunity. The régime of the sword is over. The Holy Prophet's tradition, "He will suspend warfare", bears testimony to it. Materialism, Czarism and Absolutism have come to their destined end with a horrible crash. Gog and Magog have exhausted one another. Let us rise equal to the full height of the occasion and do our duty by Islam, in spreading its light in these lands.

CHAPTER V.

PHILOSOPHY OF PRAYER.

PRAYER and its acceptance is a problem, complicated in its nature and having a diversity of effects on human character. On the one hand, its denial leads one gradually to atheism, its wrong conception leads, on the other, to result in inaction and inertia. When taken as a substitute for self-exertion, prayer conduces to the enervation of all the human faculties. Such prayers, however, fail, as they must, to meet with Divine acceptance. Recourse is then made to degrading practices, such as *Pir*-worship, tomb-worship, spells and incantations. These are then looked up to, for the gratification of personal desires. This is in fact due to an absolutely mistaken notion of the true significance of prayer.

This is not the place to enter into a lengthy discussion of Prayer, its nature and its acceptance. Suffice to say that prayer is the only real and strong connecting link between man and his Creator. It is in fact, our sense of utter dependence upon some Higher Being that tends to create in us a submissive frame of mind. Dependence, indeed, is the one effective remedy to cure an over-bearing and vain-glorious temperament. Prayer is the unfolding of one's heart to the Higher Power, on the arising of a need demanding

satisfaction. If, however, such satisfaction is not forthcoming, all enthusiasm to turn to Him in time of need, is damped. Likewise the idea that, having created the universe, God interferes no longer with its working, also leads to scepticism, materialism and ultimately to atheism. And what, in fact, is the good in accepting such a Deity? He is more like a father who happens to be the cause of procreating a child under the sensual impulse, but thereafter, cares little for its upbringing. Can the child have any respect whatsoever for such a father? How then can a Creator command the veneration of those He has created, but does not look to their well-being? Acceptance of prayer is the very essence of godliness. The Qur-ánic proclamation, "Surely, I am nigh and answer the call of the praying one when he prays Me", breathes a thorough conviction into the heart of man, enabling him to lay down his very life in His path. This firm faith has been the cause of producing righteous people and martyrs. This implicit confidence in Divine assistance has put an end to all despair and acts of suicide. A non-believer-in-prayer, when frustrated in his hopes, often resorts to suicide, which may take the form of extinction of his life or of a paralysing inertia overtaking his faculties. Instances of such acts of suicide are by no means few and far between. There has been many a man with a firm resolution, who aspired at one time to dominate the whole world, but fell a pitiable victim to despair in time of disappoint-

ments and defeats; and passed from the sphere of active life. This suicide-in-action is worse than physical suicide and prayer is the only antidote to this evil.

Lack of knowledge of the true significance of prayer has been responsible for all forms of inactivity, idleness, indolence, negligence, lassitude and inertia. A sceptic, when he finds, on the one hand, the Western non believers-in-prayer working wonders through their Power-of-Action; converting barren regions into blissful gardens, while the Eastern believers-in-prayer on the other, making hell of their ready-made heaven which Nature has so generously awarded them—is there any wonder that his sceptical bent of mind should culminate into positive denial?

The indiscriminate charitableness of the well-to-do in Eastern countries is responsible to a great extent, for the streets of Eastern cities swarming with mendicants. This indiscreet, though well-meaning charity, has been the cause of paralysing a vast amount of vitality and energy. In the case of India alone, I believe more than one third of the total power-of-action is allowed to run waste in shrines and temples. But the blame lies with the Hindu or Muslim purses that recklessly drain their contents in that direction and thus encourage inactivity. If to-day we turn this flow of gold and silver into some better channels on well-organized lines, as is done in Europe, this very day shall our shrines and streets be purged of their idlers and vagabonds. This will result

in a considerable increase in the labour of India and prosperity will follow as a matter of course. Now, if beggary in this case has led to idleness and waste of energy, why should not the so-called prayer tend to bring about the same consequence? If we can have what we want for the mere asking, why should we bother to exert ourselves? When God listens to my prayers and I can beg everything of Him in time of need, why at all should I work? We have some sense of humiliation in turning to a fellow-man for the satisfaction of our needs and what is more, he may not be in a position to help us out of the difficulty. But it is no disgrace to ask of God Who can assist us without fail. Thus, in the case of God, prayer, in the sense of begging, is prolific of greater evil than in that of man. Hence it is argued that faith in the acceptance of prayer is far more harmful than the evil of begging of our fellow-man. This is an objection that we must address ourselves to meet.

The Holy Qur-án has greatly facilitated the solution of this problem. Notwithstanding the indiscriminate nature of Eastern charity, with all its evil consequences, the institution of charity can not be dispensed with. Is there a section of human society where charity is not regarded as a high form of virtue? Poverty and indigence are the unavoidable accompaniments of every society, however advanced, to relieve which, every caste and creed, inculcates charity. Charity, as such, is all good and nothing but good. It is

its wrong use that makes it a curse for mankind. If properly regulated, it will not only counteract the effect of poverty, but will also wipe indolence and inactivity off the face of the earth. The same is the case with prayer. According to the Islamic conception of prayer, it is only a man-of-action that is entitled to beseech God's help. Only such prayers meet with Divine acceptance that are made *after* one has exerted himself tooth and nail to achieve his end. Those, however, that do not make use of their faculties are not competent to avail themselves of prayer. Islam condemns beggary, so much so, that according to a tradition of the Holy Prophet, the beggars will rise on the Day of Resurrection, with their faces blackened. Charity has been enjoined to succour those who cannot find a way out of their straits, notwithstanding their utmost exertions. Likewise, prayer also manifests its efficacy only in the case of those who spare no pains to achieve their end through self-exertion. It is such people to whom comes assistance from the Lord when they pray for it. As to the idler, he has no share of Islamic charity nor of Islamic prayer.

In this connection, I cannot help referring in passing, to the unconscious injury done by certain merchants of Bombay, who daily provide for the bread of hundreds of vagabonds. In doing so, they encourage indolence and poverty. They will do well to realize that however well-meaning their charity, it carries no value in the eyes of Allah. On the Day of Judgment, they will, no

doubt, have millions of charity to their credit, but overbalancing it by far they shall have the mischief caused to those whom they feed. Besides, the loss it entails to the Muslim community in general and the familis of these idlers in particular, must also go to their discount. Such promiscuous charity does far greater harm than good, and is therefore deprecated by the Holy Qur-án.

Further reflection on the teachings of the Holy Qur-án brings the true nature of prayer to light. Prayer does not mean begging. Islamic prayer is intended to ask only for the way leading to the goal in view. In order to reach the goal, to achieve the end, prayer does not help us beyond this; it simply points the way, and we must tread along it in order to get at the object of our desire. Prayer does in no way absolve us of the necessity of doing the journey ourselves. All it does is to open the right way before the way-farer when he comes to a parting of the ways and does not know which one to take. Nor is this done at the very commencement of the journey. The doorway is opened only after self-exertion, in order to serve as a safeguard against despondency, infusing fresh hope into the heart of the man-of-action. Such is the Islamic conception of prayer; keeping this in view, let the non-believer-in-prayer decide for himself whether prayer leads, as he thinks, to the ultimate extinction of man's power-of-action or serves as a spur to our failing spirits on the field of action. A materialist, when overwhelmed

in the course of his struggle, gives way to despair and commits in some cases suicide. But a believer-in-prayer, when he finds his horizon overcast with thick clouds, can yet see through his prayer a silver lining on the fringe thereof and instead of feeling depressed, he is cheered up to greater enthusiasm and energy. Prayer brings him fresh energy, strengthens his failing steps, accelerates his speed and before long he finds himself at the summit of success. This is the truth we find inculcated in the very opening chapter of the Holy Qur-án—*Al Fatiha*—otherwise known as *Umm-ul-Qurán*—the mother of the Qur-án. In other words, the *Fatiha* contains in a nutshell, the whole gist of the teachings of the Holy Qur-án. At least thirty two times a day, we repeat this chapter in our five daily prayers. This in fact constitutes the main part of the prayer. The deep wisdom underlying this prayer, is admitted on all hands, by friend and foe alike. There could not be a better form for a human heart in which to unfold itself to its Creator. Let us see what philosophy of prayer we can glean from this chapter.

It is obvious that every prayer or petition must consist of three distinct parts. Firstly, we must address the authority with the epithets appropriate to the nature of our solicitations. For instance, it so happens, sometimes, that civil and criminal powers are invested in one and the same person. If however, our case is of a criminal nature, we address the court as a magistrate; if

civil, as a judge. The second stage of a petition relates to a statement of our title to what we ask for. And then we place our request proper before the court. Exactly these three stages have been laid down in the *Fatiha.* We address our God with the titles of *Rab, Rahman, Rahim* and *Malik-i-Yaum-iddin.* Then we show our capability and right, by saying "Thee do we worship and Thee do we ask for help". And then we give vent to what we are anxious to have granted: "Guide us unto the right path".

Obviously, no petition can be entertained unless formulated with due regard to these stages, even in an earthly court of justice. The same is the case in addressing our prayers to the Lord. We rightly call him, at the very outset, the *Rab* i. e. Creator of the whole Universe, with which is bound up the satisfaction of the immediate object of our prayer. In addressing Him as *Rahman,* we state that means of satisfaction have already been created by Him; but as *Rahim,* we admit that unless we make proper use of His free gifts, we must not expect any further blessings from Him. Again, when we style Him as *Malik-i-Yaum-iddin* i. e. the Master of the day of Requital, we confess that if we use or abuse these God-given gifts, we must expect the inevitable reward or punishment. Do Muslims care to ponder what kind of God they are addressing? Is it the God of the *Fatiha* you approach in your daily prayers? You must realize that unless you make the best use of the faculties God has en-

dowed you with and of the material around you, you are ungrateful for His previous gifts and hence do not deserve any more. The Holy Qur-án says: "And the prayer of the *Kaffirs* (ungrateful ones) shall not but misguide". Keeping idle, you show practical ingratitude both for the gift of your faculties and of the material around you; and consequently your prayers, instead of taking you out of your difficulties, have been the cause of your additional misguidance. Under a wrong conception of prayer, you cherish the idle hope that the object of your desire will of itself come to you. You give up exerting your own faculties and thus losing your power-of-action, you become the victim of further misguidedness.

Likewise the second part of the prayer is worth careful consideration: "Thee do we worship and Thee do we ask for assistance". Thus, our invoking Divine help is contingent, according to our own confession, on our having previously discharged our part of worshipping Him. Unless we have duly worshipped Him, we are not in a position to approach Him for assistance. Now, what is worship? Prayer, fasting, pilgrimage and poor-rate do not by themselves constitute worship, as commonly supposed. They are so many means to create a worshipful frame of mind in man. The object of your prayer is bound up with certain means. The Holy Qur-án enjoins that you shall leave no stone unturned to bring about all these means and it is only when you have done this that you can honestly say, "Thee do we worship".

And then alone are you in a position to ask God's help. Unless you have done your level best, you are guilty of telling a lie before God when you make bold to assert, "Thee do we worship". Surely you have not worshipped Him, for He says you must spare no nerve and then come to Him for help. You take no pains and yet have the cheek to assure the All-Knowing God that you do worship Him. It is a lie. And you know how perjury is punished in an ordinary court of justice. What cause for grumbling then, if you incur Divine wrath for telling a lie to His face!

There is a significant distinction between the Arabic words *i'anat* and *imdad*. The one means the making up of some deficiency while the other signifies addition to something. In our prayer, we do not ask *imdad* (extension of gifts), but *i'anat* (making up for our deficiency in resources). In other words, our prayer amounts to this: "O Lord! We have done our best, we have exerted our various faculties to their utmost in employing every means within our power for the realization of a certain object. Now, we come to Thee to extend us a helping hand to make up for whatever drawbacks are still there". This being the spirit of our prayer, is it not again a mis-statement of facts to ask for Divine *i'anat* without having done our level best?

The third part of the prayer also inculcates the same lesson. When we say, "Guide us unto the right path", do we not take it for granted that we have already tried all other ways on our

own account and now ask to be shown a straight path to our goal? Again, we do not ask to be *taken* to our goal, but only to be *pointed out* to the right path leading thereto. As for the rest, we shall ourselves tread along it in order to reach our destination. Further on we emphasize our anxiety concerning the right path by clearly defining it as "the path of those, on whom Thou has bestowed favours, not of those who incurred Thy wrath, nor of those who went astray".

Muslims have thrown away these words of wisdom, while others have made them the guiding principle of life. Whereas Jesus taught the prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread", Islam taught us to pray for being shown the right way to earn our bread. The followers of Jesus have adopted the teaching of Islam, inasmuch as they strive to learn the various ways and means whereby bread may be obtained; whereas Muslims have become Christians for all practical purposes, in so far as they wish to have ready-made bread. The Christian world was true to the teaching of Jesus for some fourteen centuries, and believed that mere repetition of a prayer was enough for the achievement of an end; but experience at last brought home to them the futility of such an idle course. They came to realize that true prayer consisted in asking for the ways to success: "Guide us unto the right path".

Unfortunately, our daily prayers to-day, are more of the type of parrot-like repetition of words, the significance of which, we never care to realize.

As a matter of fact, while going through our prayers, we are utterly unconscious of what we mean. In this connection, I have but one request to make of my readers. The very first time they should say their prayers after having read these passages, let them have the true significance of *Fatiha* in view. Let them not repeat the verses as a formality, that has got to be got through, but as a means to help them out of their immediate difficulties. Let them have the full import of the prayer in mind, which may be expanded in some such words:—"O Lord! Thou art the *Rab* of the whole universe. I am confident Thou hast created everything necessary for our nourishment and evolution. To satisfy our needs, Thou hast already created the requisite means; for Thou art *Rahman*. Thou art also *Rahim*, and so, every effort on my part shall be rewarded manifold, as soon as I make use of what Thou hast already granted me. I know, at the same time, that unless I exert myself to the utmost, I cannot deserve Your blessings as *Rahim*. I am also positive, that being the Master of the day of Requital Thou shalt call me to account for any omission, or commission, on my part. I have already tried to the best of my means and ability to achieve the particular end; now I come to Thee to make up for what defect is still left in my efforts. But what I ask for, is simply to be directed to the right path, along which I undertake to tread myself in order to reach the goal". And so forth.

Dear Brethren! Think within yourselves, if you ever say your prayers in such a spirit. Should such be your prayers, for a single week, you may rest assured Divine acceptance will follow you like a shadow. Elsewhere, in the Holy Qurán, the same conditions have been laid down for the acceptance of a prayer:—"I answer the call of the praying one when he prays. Let them pray to Me; acquire the characteristics of a *Mu'min* so that they may be guided aright". Two words in this Divine promise are worthy of special note: To be a *Mu'min* which requires *action* and to ask simply for guidance, the journey being done by ourselves.

In brief, the object of Islamic prayer, is to invoke Divine assistance that comes to take a man of Action by the hand and guide him in a difficult situation. The Creator provides all the necessary means, as soon as one takes a step in the field of Action. In binding up consequences with certain means, which we must exert ourselves to employ, Divine Wisdom has our own good in view. This is the only process by which to develop our various faculties. To illustrate the point, take the case of a child, born in a well-to-do family. All means of conveyance are avaliable to carry it about. Would the parente like the idea that the child should never take the trouble of walking on its own legs? No! On the other hand, they would make it use its own legs, as often as possible; for they know this is the only way to strengthen

its muscles. Misplaced kindness will tend to cripple it. God is far more affectionate towards us than our parents; besides, He knows far more what can best promote our welfare. Hence it is that He has bound up all our good with some action on our own part; for, in action lies the cultivation of innate capabilities. Acceptance of prayer has thus been made contingent on our utmost self-exertion, for the same reason.

It is sometimes objected: Why should we resort to prayer at all? Has not God created all sorts of means necessary for the achievement of a particular object? If so, why not hunt after those means and employ them to gain our end? Where is the good of prayer? This again is due to a wrong notion of prayer. Prayer is not asking for a particular thing, but for the means with which it is inseparably bound up. This being the right conception of prayer, how can we ask for further means, unless we have exhausted those already at our disposal? But, notwithstanding our making use of whatever means we may, we can never be positive as to whether these will inevitably lead to the desired end. Hence the necessity of approaching God to enable us to employ all the means needful and make them, when employed, prolific of good. In the case of our physical ailments, we take certain medicines, but can we say, for certain, whether they will be efficacious? Thus need for prayer is always there, even though all the possible means be at our disposal; for it rests with God to make them fruitful.

The idea that all consequences are bound up with particular means, has given rise to a grave misapprehension. When this universe works in accordance with a fixed course of cause and effect, regulated by what are known as the immutable laws of nature, what part does God play in the management of its affairs? Is He not more like a mechanic who, having designed and created a machine, sets it in motion and has nothing whatsoever to do with it thereafter? Hence, it is alleged, it is no use praying to God, Who has no direct hand in regulating our affairs. Everything goes on just in accordance with the set course of laws. It is no doubt true that we find Divine Laws at work in the Universe. The numerous laws that have been or may be discovered, ultimately resolve themselves into four main attributes of God, set forth in the Holy Qur-án:—*Rab, Rahman, Rahim* and *Malik*. The last of these Divine Attributes—Malik (Master)—shows that He is the Master of everything, even of His own created laws. He has the power, according to the Islamic conception of His Attributes, to overrule the fixed course of law ordained by Him. Thus, the objection that He has no concern with the machinery of this universe vanishes. The power of direction, even of the laws working in Nature, rests in His own hand. But in order to create a sense of respect for His laws in the heart of man, He has been so pleased as to bind up all achievements into an immutable chain of cause and effect. The Holy Qur-án says:—

> "Whosoever is *Muttaqi* in the eye of the Lord, He will make for him a way out of his difficulties and will grant him provision from a source he does not even dream of. And whosoever trusts in God, He will surely find Him sufficient; for He is All-Powerful in doing His will and He has ordained a measure for everything".

A Divine Promise which is a never-failing source of solace to the Chosen of God in times of trials and tribulations! When thick clouds of despair and despondency overhang the horizon and the last straw of troubles is on the point of breaking the back of the firmest and the most steadfast, and silent eyes involuntarily turn up to Heaven, asking: "When is the help of God to come"? Thereupon comes down Divine consolation to soothe the bleeding heart: "Rest ye assured! Divine help is at hand".

This is no doubt a patent truth but let it not be mistaken as a premium for idleness. The occasion for its manifestation must also be borne in mind which is: "Whosoever is a *Muttaqi* in the eyes of God". The price of such Divine help is *taqwa* (observance of Divine Laws). A *Muttaqi* is one who is scrupulous in observing the laws ordained by God. Can a man doing nothing and thus disregarding the Divine laws of cause and effect, claim to be a *Muttaqi*?

Muslims all over the world have to-day reached this stage of utter despair. "When is the help of God to come?" seems to be on all lips. Most of them have despaired even of this Divine help and rightly so in my opinion; for they are devoid

of *taqwa* which alone can make one a fit recipient of Heavenly help. "God shall make a way out of difficulties", is no doubt, the Divine promise, but its fulfilment is contingent on *taqwa*. The Holy Qur-án has clearly outlined all the ways of *taqwa* for us, and if we are anxious to receive help from on High, let us tread along those ways and make ourselves deserving of Divine help.

Would the so-called religions leaders give some consideration to this all-important reform of Muslim society — the cultivation of true *taqwa*. They indulge in tall talk about *taqwa*, in their sermons, but they would do well to give people a correct notion of what *taqwa* is. They must tell them that according to the Holy Qur-án and the Traditions, one that has attained to the age of majority but does not earn his own living, is not a *Muttaqi*. One who lives solely on the heritage of his father, is not a *Muttaqi*. One who does not exert himself for the achievement of his object, but looks up to others to do it for him, is not a *Muttaqi*. One who does not devote God-given faculties to the service of his fellowman, is not a *Muttaqi*. One who does not sacrifice self-interest for cummunal interest is not a *Muttaqi*. One who does not lead a good family life, and maltreats his kith and kin, misappropriates other's belongings, does not take care of the poor, the orphan and the widow, is not a *Muttaqi*. Even his daily prayers are worthless, as the Holy Qur-án says:—

> "Have you seen the man who belies religion? It is the one who treats the orphan harshly and does not urge others to feed the hungry. Woe unto such praying ones who are unmindful of their prayers."

In a word, one who does not set a high example in every walk of life, is not a *Muttaqi.*

I believe I have said enough to explain my conception of Islamic prayer. Like the problem of *taqdīr,* prayer was also intended to give an impetus to our Power-of-Action. But by an irony of fate, we have converted these same problems into a curse for ourselves. They became a barrier in the way of our progress. Taking a perverted view of things, we came to look upon ACTION as incompatible with FAITH. Perfect Faith, we came to believe, could only be attested in doing nothing, and thus depending solely upon God's grace for our needs. An effort on our part, we thought, meant a lack of Faith in Allah. Thorough Faith absolved us of all self-exertion. If we were truly faithful we must look up solely to God for the satisfaction of our needs. Why should we work? It would be only to betray our lack of confidence in our Creator. Prayer by itself is enough to bring us Divine favours.

This is only self-delusion — the outcome of our human weakness to shirk labour. The Holy Qur-án, the life of the Holy Prophet and the records of other righteous men — all contradict such a view in unmistakable terms. As we sow, so must reap, is the immutable law, applicable not only to prayers, but even in the case of positive

Divine promises. Even a definite promise from the Lord does not find fulfilment until we have proved ourselves deserving of it, through our utmost self-exertion. Fulfilment of the promise to Moses had to be postponed because the requisite effort on the part of his followers was not forthcoming. How much more must Action be indispensable in the case of prayer in which we are not *promised* something, but we *ask* for something. Divine grace showers on us only when we have raised the clouds of uttermost exertion to Heaven. The truth has been duly elucidated in the last section of the Qur-ánic Chapter, *Al-i-Imran*:—

> "Our Lord! Grant us what Thou hast promised us by Thy Apostles and disgrace us not on the day of resurrection; surely Thou dost not fail to make good Thy promise. So their Lord accepted their prayer: That I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other; they, therefore, who emigrated and were turned out of their homes and persecuted in My way and who fought and were slain, I will most certainly cover their evil deeds, and I will most certainly make them enter gardens beneath which rivers flow: a reward from Allah, and with Allah is yet better reward".

Would that Muslims would ponder over the truth contained in these verses! Some-body has been spoken of as reminding Allah of His promise. Allah, in response, shows His readiness to fulfil His promises, but what is the condition He assigns for so doing? He enumerates the various troubles Muslims have undergone in the way of Allah — their self-exertion, their own ACTIONS.

The early Muslims did not attain success, as history tells us, but through self-exertion rewarded by Divine Mercy?

To-day, wo find ourselves in the throes of difficulties and troubles, *in consequence of our own inactivity or misactivity.* The ignominy that befalls us on all sides is our own handiwork. We have been robbed of our possessions, but the blame does not lie wholly at the door of others. The causes of our downfall, were brewing in ourselves, long since. The power of others is only another name for our own weakness. We have been long suffering from the evils which at last brought down on us the Divine decree, "Thou givest the kingdom to whomsoever Thou pleasest and taketh away the kingdom from whomsoever Thou pleasest". The ill-will or treachery of others, could do us little harm, had we not, through our own misdeeds, incurred Divine wrath. Now, the only sure way to the restoration of our lost power and glory, is to prove ourselves worthy in the eyes of the Lord. What is kingship but the reward that comes to crown our labours? Let us have the Holy Qurán for our guide, and heed this lesson of *Action,* but for which any hope of success is an empty dream. Let us be up and doing. Divine grace will not delay to shower on us once more. Our destiny lies in our own hands. We have marred it ourselves; ourselves let us make it.

CHAPTER VI.

RANSOM, ATONEMENT, INTERCESSION AND MEDIATION.

As you sow, so shall you reap, is the law laid down by the Providence of God. His treasures are infinitely vast and no amount of free distribution can detract from them one whit. Yet, His Wisdom has so chosen that there shall be no free gifts except those already made under His Attribute, *Rahmaniyyat.* No one shall receive anything but in the measure of exertion on his part. Is it conceivable that such a God should consent to make a free award on the intercession or mediation of one person for another? This would mean violation of His own law, which is unthinkable. Does not He clearly tell us in the Holy Qur-án:—"You shall find no change in the laws of God"? Would it not look a grave inconsistency in Him, that on the one hand, He should like His chosen ones to suffer martyrdom, on the field of ACTION, while on the other, He should freely grant His gifts to the wicked or the indolent, for mere atonement, or intercession by others.

This Divine law—no pain, no gain—has in fact the good of man himself in view. The underlying motive is to save his various faculties from getting atrophied. These numerous potentialities in the nature of man can grow

and develop, only when brought into play on the field of ACTION. God is self-sufficient. He does not stand in need of our deeds. Nor is there any limit to His rich treasures. The object is simply to bring out, nourish and foster whatever good and noble lies within ourselves. "Whosoever strives", says the Holy Qur-án, "surely he strives for his own good. Surely God is self-sufficient, independent of His creation". Thus, on the one hand, God is above all need of our actions and on the other, His treasures are unbounded. Where then is the harm, should He bestow His gifts freely on the inactive? He has already showered His blessings of *Rahmaniyyat* on the good and the bad alike. Why should He withhold His further gifts, and declare Action to be the key to His treasures of *Rahimiyyat?* The only object is thus the development of our latent capabilities, which is not possible but through ACTION.

This unfolding and development of our faculties, which is called *falah* in Islamic parlance, is in fact, the sole object of religion. With a view to bringing about this very end, God has, on the one hand, ingrained certain cravings in us, calling for satisfaction; whereas, on the other, He has created the means of their satisfaction, and has bound up their achievement with ACTION. Thus, neither the inner cravings are worth anything in themselves, nor the means of their satisfaction. The object in both, is to bring our Power of Action into exercise, so that the seedlings of

high morals in us, may germinate, grow and develop and bear fruit, in other words, that we may become *Muflihin.* Our legs possess the capability of locomotion in a potential form. In order to actualize it, God has given us the cravings of hunger and thirst, on the one hand, and has supplied food and water, on the other. To satisfy these calls of nature, we must of necessity, move about to fetch food and water and in this way, we acquire the power of walking, which was there in our legs, in a latent condition. If, however, through the intercession or atonement of another on our behalf, we could be exempted from undergoing the trouble of moving ourselves and food and water were to come to us, for no exertion on our part, the very object of the creation of thirst and water, hunger and food, would have been defeated. Neither thirst and hunger nor water and food are ends in themselves. They are both means to subserve an ulterior end —the cultivation of the power of locomotion in our legs. Similarly, all our cravings and their satisfaction are not the be-all and end-all of our life. These we possess in common with the lower animals, and to acquire perfection in their satisfaction, is only a developed type of animality. Human perfection lies in the cultivation of high morals, which constitute the only difference between human and animal species. But these lofty morals are dependent for their manifestation on the selfsame animal cravings. How could we display the virtue of generosity or benevolence, had we

not exerted ourselves under some animal impulse to acquire wealth? Unless these inner promptings stir us, we should not bother to look for the means of satisfaction and the seeds of the corresponding moral virtues would die out, without sprouting. ACTION is the sole purpose in view. In hunting after *Pirs, Fakirs* and other similar intermediaries, we seek the satisfaction of the same cravings, but without self-exertion. We are anxious to acquire the means of their satisfaction, but at the same time, try to shirk the pain of action, little knowing, that in doing so, we are defeating the very object of our creation. Hence it is in direct contravention of the Divine scheme to believe that any ransom, atonement, intercession or mediation can prevail with God and exempt us from the trouble of ACTION.

Let it not be misunderstood to mean that I do not believe in the Islamic problem of *Shafa'at.* I am a firm believer in the Holy Prophet's *Shafa'at.* In this very life, he has done a great deal of *Shafa'at* for us, which will find manifestation on the Day of Resurrection. I do not propose entering into a discussion of *Shafa'at* here. I shall deal with it in connection with the problem of Islamic doctrines and principles of Faith. Suffice to point out that *Shafa'at* is dependent, according to the Holy Qur-án, upon Divine permission. In the case of the Holy Prophet, the permission is there, but what the *Pirs* and *Fakirs* who have become the popular resort of Muslims? Do they possess any similar Divine authority?

Muslim brethren! I beseech you to give a calm and careful consideration to what I place before you. Do not accept as truth, nor as Islamic, anything that tends to weaken your Power of Action and your sense of responsibility. The causes of your present downfall, if carefully sifted and analysed, will ultimately resolve themselves, to a large extent, into Pir-worship, tomb-worship, spells, incantations and charms. Let me offer you, an easy solution. Go to the *Pir* or *Fakir*, counting on whose intercession, you have dispensed with the necessity of Action, and ask him on oath, if he possesses the Divine permission, as spoken of in the Holy Qur-án:— "Who is it that can intercede with Him, but through His permission"? None of them, I may assure you, can produce the requisite Divine credentials. I do not in any way mean to minimize the value of the company of good and righteous men. What I mean, is only this much—that you must not depend upon them for your salvation. They can not help you in the least. All depends upon your own deeds. Avail yourself of their good example by all means. Cultivate the love of God, in their company. This is what the Holy Qur-án also enjoins: "Keep with the righteous ones". But woe unto you, if in approaching a good man, you hope to find in him, a scape-goat for your sins, or an exemption from self-exertion.

I will now briefly touch upon the Qur-ánic verses, which are cited as an authority for the problem of intercession:—

> "O ye who believe! Guard against transgressing the limits of Allah and seek a *wasila* (means) towards Him, and strive hard in His way, so that you may achieve *falah* (success). Those they call besides Allah, themselves need a *Wasila* (means) towards their Lord".

The second verse plainly speaks of the futility of approaching anybody besides Allah, be he a *Pir* or a *Fakir*. As to the first one, it is the mainstay of the advocates of the problem of intercession. They make much of the word *Wasila* (means), but reflect little what the word refers to. It is clearly stated further on in the same verse, that the *Wasila,* is no other than *Jihad* (struggle) in the path of Allah. This is the only *Wasila* (means), the one way, leading to God. Nothing else but *Struggle* in the way of the Lord is capable of taking us to Him. Ignorance of Arabic idioms is responsible to a great extent for all such misunderstandings. It is forgotten that one word may have one meaning in one language, while quite a different one in another. The Arabic word, *makr,* for instance, connotes a clever plan to frustrate enemy schemes, which is something commendable. The Holy Qur-án speaks of God, as *Khair-ul-Makirin,* the best of such planners. In Hindustani, however, the significance undergoes a radical change and the word is used in a bad sense, meaning, cunning, treacherous and deceitful. Consequently, certain detractors of the Holy Qur-án, pick out this very word, as an objection, saying that the God of Islam is the most deceitful. We repeat the same mistake when we

attempt to construe an Arabic word, according to the idiom of our own language. The word *Wasila* is derived from *Wasl,* which means to strive to approach something. *Wasila* is the means wherewith we can effect such approach. Thus, *Wasila* in the verse, signifies the means of approach towards God. This, the real *Wasila,* is our own actions, which alone carry any weight with the Lord. The righteous and virtuous men, whose company, whose example, whose words may inspire us to virtuous deeds may be spoken of as a *Wasila,* but only indirectly, inasmuch as they infuse us with a zeal for good deeds. DEEDS, ACTIONS are the true, the immediate *Wasila* of approaching God. If we are advised to keep in the company of the good, it is simply to receive the inspiration from their life and strive to walk in their footsteps. They can in no way intercede with the Lord on our behalf, so as to lift us up to God, in the twinkling of an eye. SELF-EXERTION in the path of virtue is the one and only *Wasila.*

It seems as though, on a false analogy, we have mistaken the Divine court to be of the same character as our earthly courts, where recommendation, bribery, and favouritism can prevail. These are the things that we have attributed to the Divine Being, as well. Are not ransom, atonement and intermediation, the same three things, though under different names?

But the funniest thing is, that those whom we take up for our *Wasila* (intermediary) with the Lord, do not come up to even our selfmade

standards. To be the descendant of a godly person constitutes no claim to godliness. But with us, every wicked rogue, is good enough to bo our *Wasila,* simply because he can trace his lineage to some righteous person. All these are misguided ways. The Holy Prophet warned his own dear daughter, Fatima, that her parentage would avail her nothing with the Lord. Her own deeds alone could win her His approbation. This being the case, is there any sense in setting up the progeny of Fatima of blessed memory, as our redeemers, regardless of their ways and doings. In a word, ACTION is your one and your only *Wasila* with Allah, as the Holy Qur-án says: "Surely virtuous deeds wipe off evil ones".

To give you a yet clearer view of what true *wasila* means, let me invite your attention to another fact, met with in the pages of the Holy Qur-án. Whatever serves as a connecting link between two things, so as to weld them together, is known as a *Wasila.* Does it stand to reason that there should be any connection between the pure and the impure? Is it conceivable that things of a contradictory nature should become one with each other by means of a third thing—a middle term, a *Wasila*—retaining at the same time, their original characteristics. An insight into the Qur-ánic teachings reveals the fact that we can avail of the blessings of a particular Divine attribute, only when we have cultivated the same quality in ourselves. Like attracts like, in things spiritual, as in physical. If we can not show mercy

to others, we do not possess the necessary aptitude for meriting Divine Mercy. God is merciful, and if I am not, there can be no connection between us. Mercy and cruelty can not go together. The only way for me to establish my relations with God, is to cultivate in myself, the virtue of mercy, and thus create an affinity with Him. And how can I do so, but through merciful actions? ACTION, thus is the one *Wasila* of a Muslim. "Imbue yourselves with Divine attributes", says the Holy Qur-án. The Holy Prophet is the only *Shafi* for such a union with God, inasmuch as his perfect example inspires us to walk along the ways leading unto Him. The footprints that he has left for our guidance are the only *Wasila* towards the Lord. This is no credulity, but a solid fact. In following the Holy Prophet, we are following the Holy Qur-án, which is the one means of purifying ourselves of all sorts of uncleanliness. Such efficacy is not met with in any other Sacred Book. Atonement has, on the contrary, given a fresh impetus to wrong doing. Having weakened the sense of responsibility in man, it has only served as a lure to evil. Furthermore, atonement does not enable man to attain salvation in the sense set forth above. Salvation in Islam does not imply exemption from the due punishment of an evil. It means the cultivation of positive virtue in man. The salvation of a tyrant, for instance, does not consist in saving him from the penalty of his cruelty, but in wiping tyranny off his very nature. Hell, in Islamic phraseology, is a name for all

the painful processes to which a sinful man is subjected, with a view to purging him of his evil tendencies. Thus, if salvation lies in avoiding some external pain, atonement may be of good to me. But if the very impurities of my own heart, constitute the fire of hell; if the low propensities of my nature, are their own punishment, nothing but the internal transformation of my own heart, can be the true cure. Thus all such things as atonement, ransom, intercession, are of no avail in securing us our salvation, which must come from within. On the other hand, they have been mainly responsible for the moral as well as temporal deterioration of man.

CHAPTER VII.

TAQDIR OR PREDESTINATION.

"THE decrees of *taqdir* are immutable. Whatever comes to pass in the world, does so in accordance with the writ of *taqdir*. Whatever happens to a man is just what is within the range of his *taqdir*. Neither our good, nor our evil, can trespass the limits set by the hand of the Lord. Man's actions, his movements, in a word, whatever he does or whatever befalls him—everything is preordained by an unalterable Divine decree". These, in a nutshell, are invariably the thoughts and words of those who find themselves in the grip of Nemesis, in consequence of their evil deeds. This is the consolation devised to stifle the voice of conscience on every wrong doing. This is a convenient excuse to shirk responsibility for our misdeeds, and to evade the sting of remorse. At the door of this doctrine, we lay the blame for our own negligence, for our indolence, for our idleness—for every form of our wickedness. Thus, the last chance of reformation is also lost.

This is the state of things. But at the same time whatever is said above as to the immutable and all-encompassing nature of *taqdir*, is true to the very letter. As a matter of fact, *taqdir* is a truth, without which, there can be

no religion, worth the name. Rather the very purpose of religion is to acquaint man with the nature of *taqdir*. If human edification is the object of Divine revelation, as discussed above, this cannot be achieved but through faith in Divine *taqdir* and regulation of one's conduct, in accordance thereto. To believe in *taqdir*, is an article of faith with a Muslim. In fact, the rest of the six points of Faith—God, angels, sacred books, messengers, judgment day, life-after-death —are all intended to strengthen the demands of *taqdir*. What is called science, is only another name for a knowledge of Divine *taqdir*. True faith in this doctrine, is the only way to success.

I have expressed two views concerning *taqdir*, diametrically opposed to each other. Let it not be misunderstood to imply that the same doctrine of *taqdir* is capable of two conflicting aspects. Nay, these contradictory views are the outcome of the two different conceptions of the same problem. A wrong conception of *taqdir*, makes it a curse for humanity, while a right one, finds in it, the one way leading to true felicity.

By his very nature, man feels inclined to throw off responsibility for wrong, from his own shoulders. He does not like the idea of blaming himself for his sins. These two weak points in him, find in the doctrine of *taqdir*, a means of satisfaction. He hates to stand guilty, even in his own eyes. *Taqdir*, therefore, affords him a ready pretext to soothe his guilty conscience.

What an irony of fate! He was endowed with this self-accusing faculty, which might help him in self-reformation. But *taqdir* as conceived by him, comes to exonerate him of all he may indulge in; for he is a mere tool in the hands of destiny. It was not he, he satisfies himself, that did it, but it *had* to come. Could he help the inevitable Divine decree? Thus he converts *taqdir* into another licence for self-indulgence. He gives himself up to the unbridled gratification of his low cravings with a light heart; for he knows where to place the responsibility. The ever-ready excuse, *taqdir*, is there to receive the blame. A Persian poet sums up this attitude, in a beautiful couplet:—

It was not destined that I should ever pass through the street of virtue;
If you do not like it, go and change the Divine decree.

In refutation of such a suicidal view, I have just one question to ask of my Muslim brethren. Is it not true, that you regard your God as Beneficent, Kind and Merciful? According to a report from the Holy Prophet, is not God's love for His creatures, greater by far than that of a mother towards her son? If so, is it at all conceivable that such a loving Deity should choose to bind then up to such a decree? Is not God perfect purity? If so, how can He ordain that man should be guilty of evil? A drunkard, an adulterer or a gambler finds consolation in the thought that God has pre-ordained it. Is it not blasphemous to think that God should be the

Author of evil? You should think twice, before you dare attribute the wicked product of your own hands to God. A rogue says he has been created to be a rogue; nay, even long before his birth, on the day when human destiny was sealed, it was written that he must be a rogue. Could he be otherwise? This is all self-delusion. In fact, in laying such things at the door of God, you divest your God of everything good and noble. But such is not the God of Islam. He is Merciful, Beneficent, Giver of Good. It is not possible that He should make some of us destitute and needy. He is the Source of all Good. Nothing evil can come out of Him. But from your conception of *taqdir*, God stands responsible for all evils and iniquities in the world.

There is yet another point worth consideration. If my own free will has no hand in my misdeeds, it is unjust to visit them with any punishment. Even an earthly court of justice will not convict the immediate doer of a wrong, but those who are at the bottom of the mischief. The immediate doer is regarded as punishable only to the extent to which his own judgment and will have taken part in the crime. If he is a mere tool in the hands of others, he deserves no punishment. If a young boy is made the instrument of poisoning another person, no court will bring the innocent boy to book. The one who made him do it, the real cause of the murder, will be sent to the gallows. Is the Divine court of justiee not even as judicious as our earthly courts?

If we are mere puppets in the hands of an Unseen Controller, who has chalked out the minutest detail of our life, long, long since, why should we be called to account for our deeds? To illustrate the point further, supposing a particular area is delared as forbidden to civilians, under military laws. A civilian is found there, and put on trial, for breach of the law. In the course of his defence, however, he establishes the fact, that he has not been there of his own accord. Certain soldiers caught hold of him and dragged him to the forbidden area. The man will be discharged there and then. But you do not credit your God with even a human sense of justice. He controls every inch of the course of our life. He has already sealed our doom, yet He is awaiting the hour of hurling us down into the fire of hell. Can injustice go further?

The Holy Qur-án refutes this prevalent notion of *taqdír* in unmistakeable terms: "For it (man's soul), is the reward of what good it does, and on it is the penalty of what evil it works". Again, concerning the day of requital, it says: "This day, no soul shall be treated with a bit of injustice, nor shall you be rewarded for anything, except what you have been doing". Heaven and Hell are only intended to serve as an additional incentive to virtue, and abstention from evil. Yet again it says: Whosoever shall do a particle of good, he shall have the fruit thereof, and whosoever shall do a particle of evil, he shall have the penalty thereof". Can

such a Book teach anything like *taqdir*, as popularly conceived of? *Taqdir* takes away all responsibility, and with that, vanishes all liability to punishment, as well as all title to reward.

Responsibility presupposes knowledge, free-will and action. The ignorant, or the constrained can be saddled with no responsibility. Breach of law is punishable only in the case when the law has already been made known and the offender has contravened it of his free choice. Accordingly, the Holy Qur-án duly warns us: "Do not go nigh to this tree (of evil)". In other words, we have been told that each one of our powers is capable of growth and development. Vice, grown and developed, becomes a big tree of evil; fron good, springs up the tree of good. The Holy Qur-án points to the same truth, when it says "O Adam! Dwell here, you and your mate, in the garden, and eat of it to your satisfaction, wherever you choose; but do not go nigh to this tree, for then you will become of the transgressors". Every faculty of man, is a rich garden in a potential form. If developed to its full perfection, it will bear delicious fruit, in this life, as well as in the hereafter, of which the owner will eat plentifully. But from a waste, or a misuse of the same faculty, will crop up a tree of evil.

Obviously, a law-giver has no right to enforce his laws, unless he has publicly promulgated them. Nor must he burden the people with what is beyond their capacity. The Divine Law-

Giver has therefore, taken good care to assure mankind that "He does not place any obligation on a person, except which is within the scope of his power to fulfil". It is *after* this assurance, that He gives us the law that "Every soul shall reap the reward of whatever good it does and every soul shall bear the consequence of whatever mischief it works".

The sole purpose of religion, to my mind, is to acquaint us with the truths of *taqdir*. What brings these truths within our ken in the sphere of physical nature is known as science. Whereas, those pertaining to our moral and spiritual nature, are known as Divine Law. These truths are immutable, ordained by God Himself: "The measures of good and evil have been fixed by God Himself". *Taqdir* is nothing but these very measures, unalterably ordained by the Hand of God. Every creation of God, when taken in a particular measure is good, whereas another measure of the same thing may convert it into evil. These limits are immutable. Whenever a particular thing—be it a natural object or a human faculty or passion—is made use of in a certain degree or measure, it *shall* bear the corresponding fruit, as ordained by the Divine Will. This is the true significance of *taqdir*. It imposes no compulsion on our freedom of choice. We are quite at liberty to make use of whichever measure we would. But when once we have made the choice, the fixed, immutable consequences must inevitably follow. God has not only prescribed these limits for our

manipulating things, but has at the same time, enlightened us concerning them, so that we might be in a position to observe them. To this effect, says the Holy Qur-án: "God fixed the measures, and then gave the necessary guidance". To point out these measures, Divine Revelation has ever been coming to the help of man. The discovery of these in the physical realm, has been left to us, which is the work of science. But those pertaining to the spiritual nature of man, are embodied in what we call religion or Divine Law. In scientific terminology, these measures are called, the properties of things, while in religious phraseology, they are known as faculties.

It is obvious enough that the greater our conviction, as to the consequence, good or bad, of a particular thing, the greater the effect upon our power of action. If we know that such a measure of arsenic is fatal, it is impossible that we should make use of it in the same measure. The same is true in the case of liability to sin. The surer we feel of the painful consequences of an evil deed, the greater our power of abstention from it. On the contrary, the very idea that we can indulge in an evil with impunity, affords us encouragement to commit sin. In like manner, our enthusiasm for a thing is exactly in the same proportion as our conviction in its good consequence. When we feel doubtful as to the result of a particular action, naturally, we are indifferent towards it. Hence, to strengthen our will to undertake some thing or to abstain from it, we must know

for certain — as certain as two and two make four—that such and such a measure of it shall bring us good, and such and such, evil. And how else could the conviction in the inevitability of consequences be made firmer than by the idea that God Himself is the Author of these measures of good and evil? Human laws may permit of violation, but who can transgress a Divine limit with impunity? Thus, Divine *taqdir* is simply meant for our good. Evil must result in evil and good in good—this in the whole purport of the doctrine. And when thus convinced of the unfailing Divine decree—that whatever the action, it must bring its corresponding fruit — we are imbued with a sense of self-reliance. We believe that everything depends upon our own action, and hence the doctrine lends added strength to our Power of Action.

Look within yourselves and you will find that your conduct is the immediate consequence of your psychology of the moment. Uncertainty as to the good or bad return of a good or bad action, makes you hesitate in doing or avoiding it. Lack of firm faith in the fact that good must come out of good and evil out of evil, keeps you back from doing the one and impels you to do the other. Let this uncertainty regarding the inevitability of consequences disappear, and forthwith evil will vanish and good take hold of human conduct. In a word, our conduct is the direct outcome of whether our faith in the result of the particular deed is firm

or otherwise. The doctrine of *taqdīr* comes to teach us that the chain of cause and effect is ordained by God Himself and hence admits of no fluctuation. Thus our faith in the absolute necessity of consequences is strengthened and our conduct takes quite a different mould. It is a pity that the very principle—*taqdīr*—laid down for uplifting us to the heights of progress, has been converted through our own lack of understanding, into our virtual destruction. What was intended to lend a spur to our Power of Action, has on the contrary, tended to cripple it.

It has just been discussed, that our faith in *taqdīr* has been the key to all our scientific achievements. In the sphere of matter, we have a firm belief that various things taken in varying measures bring out particular results. All these physical sciences will, this day, fall to the ground, should we lose faith in the inevitability of the relation of cause to effect. These measures are known as the properties of things. Discover them and you shall have the corresponding result, as pre-ordained by the Divine Law of *taqdīr*. All these laws regulating the various causes and effects are immutable, as the Holy Qur-án says: "You shall find no change in the Laws of God". Hence the unshakeable firmness of our faith and the consequent exertions in the field of scientific investigation.

The upshot of the whole discussion is, that our loss and gain, our pain and pleasure, our misery and felicity, in a word each and every-

thing lies in our own hands. The *taqdir* of God, which is only another name for Divine Laws, is always at work. Nothing in the world can put a stop to its operation. Inasmuch as these laws have been made by Him — the laws of good and evil—He may be regarded, if at all, in this indirect sense, as the Author of good and evil. As a matter of fact, however the sole responsibility for whatever befalls us, lies with ourselves. Should we make use of the laws, leading to good, good shall we have as the fruit of our own action, and if we employ those designed to result in evil, evil must we have as the consequence. Light and darkness have been bound up with the sun and the law has been laid down that whosoever should come before that luminary, shall avail itself of its light, but whosoever should shut himself off from it —for instance, in a closed room—shall be deprived of it. Thus, the laws of light and darkness have been ordained by Divine *taqdir,* but whether I should have the one or the other, depends solely upon my own action. Similarly, every thing in the universe may become the source either of good or of evil to me, just as I make use of this measure of it or that. Fire may be made subservient to the immense good of mankind; it may make the working of machinery with its concomitant comfort to humanity, possible. But the same fire may be abused by a Nero, in reducing a Rome to ashes. Thus, through our own action, we convert the same

thing, fire, into a sort of heaven or hell for us. Likewise we make a thing of light to us or of darkness, of guidance or of misguidance. In other words, the various Divine Laws may be said indirectly to have led to the different consequences, and likewise, God Himself, may in a way, be regarded as the ultimate cause of the same. Thus, guidance or misguidance may in this sense be attributed to God, but as a matter of fact, we merit them through our own actions. How beautifully, the Holy Qur-án epitomizes this truth in a few words: "God misguides with it many, and He guides with it many. But He does not misguide with it, any but the transgressors (of Divine Laws)". It is thus clear that guidance or misguidance comes to us, no doubt in accordance with the fixed Divine Laws, but also through our own observance or violation of the same. It was thus of paramount importance, that respect for law should have been rigorously enforced. A slight violation of the law, therefore, results in the same degree of pain or misguidance. And when once the law has been transgressed, and an evil situation created, it is not possible to restore the normal condition, but again through some Divine Law or other. To impress the unbending nature of law, the Holy Qur-án says: "Whosoever is guided by God, no one can misguide him, and whosoever is misguided by God, no one can guide him".

There is a kind of guidance that comes to us from the Lord, as a blessing of His *Rah-*

maniyyat, to show us the way. He has been pleased to take it upon himself to point out to man the right path to which he must keep. Furthermore, He has also endowed man, with a power of discretion to enable him to make a choice between right and wrong ways. These blessings bestowed on man, devolve a corresponding duty on him—viz. the right use of them. Divine Attributes, *Rahimiyyat* and *Malikiyyat* are then brought into play, to deal with him, so that the right use of the gifts of *Rahmaniyyat* are rewarded tenfold, nay, even hundredfold, but at the same time, abuse of the same is visited with due punishment. If we avail ourselves of Divine guidance given to us in the shape of revelation, our spiritual vision will strengthen and we shall be able to understand more Divine truths. If, however, we keep away from that Source of Light, we shall have even our natural vision impaired, till ultimately, we become absolutely blind. Likewise, a call to Divine Light, if not responded to, will gradually deprive us of the power of hearkening to such like calls altogether. To this effect says the Holy Qur-án: "They have got minds, but they do not think with them; they have got ears, but they do not listen with them; they are like cattle, nay, even more misguided. They are unmindful". The same truth is embodied in another parable in the Holy Qur-án, which says: "Their parable is like the parable of those for whom somebody lit the fire. When there was light all about them, God took away the light

from them and left them in the dark, seeing nothing. They became dumb, deaf and blind and so they can not come back to the light". To explain the parable further, the Prophet is said to have made light for those whom he found in utter darkness. But on seeing the Divine Light they receded further from it and went on getting away from it, till they were too far off to see the light. They did not make use of their God-given gifts—their own faculties of seeing, hearing and speaking on the one hand, and the Heavenly Light brought by the Prophet on the other—and so under the immutable *taqdir* or Law of God, they lost these powers altogether and cannot come back to the place of light. But when such people are overtaken by calamities—the inevitable consequences of their own deeds—their consternation is thus depicted:

> **Like a heavy rainfall from clouds, in which there is utter darkness and thunder and lightning; they put their fingers to their ears, because of the thunder-peal, for fear of death; and Allah encompasses the unbelievers.**

A thousand pities! This is a life-like portrait of the Muslims of to-day. The Holy Qur-án furnished the light for them, but they turned away from it. Their faculties went on decaying day by day. Paralysis overtook their limbs, they lost their vision and could not see the right way: Reformers came and cried themselves hoarse to awaken them, but they were deaf and could not hearken to their warnings. Lack of action sapped their vitality; their limbs began dropping one

by one—Tunis, Algeria, Hungary, Bosnia and so forth, being gradually chopped off. But we were the embodiment of the Qur-ánic words, "Deaf, dumb and blind (as they are), they would not come back (to light)". Calamity after calamity fell upon us, but we did not bestir ourselves, nor did we think it worth while to turn to the Heavenly Light meant for the express purpose of our guidance. Then came on the top of this all, the culmination of our destruction. On July 23rd, 1914, arose thick clouds of the Great War, darkening our horizon. Death hovered over us like the thunder and the lightning in the parable. We closed, now our eyes, now our ears, rending the heavens with our hue and cry, at the dismemberment of the Caliphate. But Divine decree was irrevocable. We had to suffer the inevitable. Thus, we were, in fact, the authors of our own destruction.

Our Khilafat, it may be argued, fell a prey to a breach of faith on the part of others. True, our end was hastened by their cruelty. But even in this, the Holy Qur-án lays the blame at your door. This is what it says: "In this way do we place some transgressors in authority over others, in consequence of what they had been doing". The transgressors are made to rule only over those who are themselves transgressors. So the very fact that we find ourselves in the grip of *Zâlamin* (transgressors), shows that we are violaters of the Divine Laws. The panacea for all our ills, is also prescribed in this same verse.

What should we do in order to liberate ourselves from tyranny? We should cease to be transgressors; we should transform ourselves; we should submit to Divinely ordained laws and when we have brought about such a change in our condition, the domination of others will automatically vanish.

It may be noted here, that it is not God Who makes anyone "deaf, dumb and blind". Our own ways bring us to such a pass. The Qur-ánic verse, "Allah put a seal on their hearts, and on their hearing, and on their eyes is a screen", has the same significance. We abuse these faculties and the Divine Law is brought into operation, which deprives us of the same. This is the "sealing of Allah". The Holy Qur-án may be cited to illustrate the point:

> When the hypocrites come to you, they say: We bear witness that you are most surely Allah's Apostle; and Allah knows that you are most surely His Apostle, and Allah bears witness that the Hypocrites are surely liars. They make their oaths a shelter, and thus turn away from Allah's way; surely evil is that they do. That is *because they believe, then disbelieve, so a seal is set upon their hearts* so that they do not understand. (63:1, 2, 3.)
>
> Is it not clear to those who inherit the earth after its (former) residents that if We please We would afflict them *on account of their faults,* and *set a seal on their hearts* so they would not hear. (7:100.)
>
> Then did We raise up after him apostles to their people, so they came to them with clear arguments, but they would not believe in what they had rejected before; thus it is that *We set seals upon the hearts of those who exceed the limits.* (10:74.)

> And whenever a chapter is revealed, saying; Believe in Allah and strive hard along with His Apostle, those having ampleness of means ask permission of you and say; Leave us (behind), that we may be with those that sit. *They preferred to be with those who remained behind, and a seal is set on their hearts* so they do not understand. (9:86, 87.)

It is thus clear that according to the Holy Qur-án, man's own abuse of Divine powers is responsible for having his faculties sealed up. Another verse throws further light on the same truth: "Those who disbelieve—it being alike to them whether you warn them or do not warn them—will not believe. Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing and there is a covering over their eyes and there is a great chastisement for them". This is a truth that cannot be denied. Those who do not care to listen to the Divine call, and turn a deaf ear to it, can in no way avail themselves of the advice of a friend or a reformer. They do not use these faculties, and hence for the mere lack of exercise, they lose their innate capacities. This is the way in which the Divine seal is put on our hearts, eyes and ears. Is not the truth applicable to our case to the very letter? Even under the overwhelming misfortunes that we find ourselves to-day, do we possess the capability to turn to the Holy Qur-án for guidance? Nay, we have our hearts sealed up and we would grope in the dark for a way out, catching at every stray straw that may come our way, rather than seek light in the pages of the Holy Qur-án —

the fire lit for us by the Holy Prophet. Can the sealing of faculties go any further?

The whole of nature bears eloquent testimony to the truths revealed in these verses. Whatever is created in the universe is meant for our own good, but we must have the appropriate capability to avail ourselves thereof. What may be good for one, may be positively injurious for another. One man's meat, as they say, may be another man's poison. Cool water and air may be refreshing to a man of sound health, but the same blessings of God, may ruin the health of another, who has his lungs already affected. Thus, what does good to a man of sound faculties, may, on the contrary, increase the ailment of an already deranged system. It is this natural course that the Holy Qur-án refers to in the words: "In their heart lies disease, so Allah added to their disease". This is the way in which God adds to people's diseases. They are already suffering from some ailment and when they receive what is intended as a blessing from the Lord, their own diseased nature converts it into additional injury to themselves. Rainfall comes from heaven to quicken the dead earth, but every bit of land avails itself of it, just in accordance with its own intrinsic aptitude. Whether sweet-smelling lovely flowers should come out of it, or prickly shrubs, depends upon what lies within itself in the form of seed. To the same effect, the Holy Qur-án speaks of itself as rainfall from heaven and when it says: "God misleads many therewith and guides many

therewith", it only gives expression to a universal truth met with in our daily observation.

This is the true significance of the doctrine of *taqdir*. It is a principle of human progress. The world was utterly in the dark, as to its real import, and substituting fatalism for it, brought about the destruction of a vast portion of humanity. Islam came to reveal its true nature, with which was bound up the entire progress of mankind, whether in the realm of physical nature or in the domain of morals. The mistaken notion seems mainly to be due to ignorance of the Arabic language. *Qadar*, from which the word *taqdir* comes, literally means *measure*. The problem was expounded simply to teach that there are prescribed measures of good and evil in everything and we should therefore keep them in view, in the acquisition of good and the avoidance of evil. It was never intended to convey that the good and evil befalling us in this life has already been decreed and must come with the inevitable turn of fortune, in spite of ourselves. This latter view is Fatalism —a curse to human progress—to eradicate which, the Holy Qur-án has taught us the law of *taqdir*.

There is yet another misunderstanding, which must be removed at this point. The Arabic word *Mudil* as used of God, in the verse in question, does not signify, one who misleads, but one who declares to be misled. The word is used in the same sense in the following Arabic couplet:—

Ma zāla shirab-irraha hatta adallani siddiqi wa sāani baada zālika. Here the word *adallani* means

my friend declared me to be misguided. An offender is brought before a court of justice for trial. According to the law of the land, the judge finds him guilty, and gives his verdict to the same effect. Though apparently, it is the judge that makes him guilty, it is, in fact, his own offence that is responsible for it. Likewise, we violate some Divine Law and Divine judgment comes upon us to incriminate us. This is the sense in which the word *Mudil* is used of God, in the Holy Qur-án.

I have purposely omitted a discussion of the accidental calamities for which we are not directly responsible, that is to say, which are not the outcome of our own actions, as for instance, the birth of some one in a depraved family, or bringing certain diseases at birth, in consequence of heredity. These questions have a bearing on the problem of transmigration, and will be dealt with under the discussion, which I propose undertaking in a separate volume.

The laws of *taqdir*, of *hidayat* (guidance) and *dalalat* (misguidance) were revealed by the Holy Qur-án, to strengthen our power of action. *Taqdir* taught us that neither loss nor gain was pre-ordained or pre-distributed, as commonly supposed. They are, on the contrary, chained down to certain unalterable ways, walking along which a seeker must without fail, reach the inevitable goal—good or bad. Even at the very first step, he can tell whither the path will lead him—to loss or gain, to pleasure or pain. All depends upon

what measure of exertion we put into the pursuit of a particular object. Inactivity or misguided activity *shall* have its own inevitable consequences and the right sort of activity, *shall* have its own reward. Likewise, no one has been fore-doomed in the matter of guidance or misguidance. It rests entirely with us, which way we are going to take—right or wrong. So far as the requisite means are concerned, all are equally endowed with faculties as well as light to discriminate between right and wrong. Their own disuse or abuse of these faculties leads to their destruction. To this effect, says a report from the Holy Prophet Muhammad that "every child is born a Muslim" i. e. with a capacity to observe the Divine laws. Does it not deal a deathblow to the theory of fatalism, which throws man solely at the mercy of a pre-determined, irrevocable necessity, divesting him of all capability to steer his own course? Thus, the report endows each and every child, irrespective of caste, creed or nationality, with the highest possible gift—capacity to observe the law. This equal distribution of power, as inculcated by Islam, can not possibly admit of anything like fatality. Again, further on in the course of life as well, the field of progress is equally open to all alike—fair play and no favour. The laws regulating good or evil consequences are applicable to all alike. Everyone is free to work out his own destiny, the necessary equipment having been impartially provided by God. Can such a religion for one mo-

ment tolerate the fatalistic idea, which has unequal distribution of good and evil for its very essence?

Further analysis of the problem reveals that the fatalistic creed is, in fact, adopted by those who profess faith in the theory of transmigration; or those who pin down salvation to mere faith in a particular dogma. Transmigration holds that our present felicity or misery is the outcome of our deeds in our supposed previous existence. Our actions in this life, have nothing to do with our present state. They cannot avert the course of the inevitable as determined by our past life. What is this but fatality, out and out? Likewise, those who think salvation depends upon faith in the blood of Jesus, reduce the effect of our actions on our well-being or otherwise, to nothing. At its very birth, a child is supposed to have a sinful nature, and unless formally baptized, is doomed to eternal perdition. For this reason, the clergyman is sent for, as soon as the child is born, lest it should pass away unbaptised, in which case its place is believed to be hell. What is this but fatalism of the worst type? Why hold the innocent child responsible for nothing on its own part? Again, millions of children born in non-Christian homes lose all chance of baptism. Why book them to hell for no fault of theirs? Were they consulted as to where they would like to take birth—in a Christian or a non-Christian home? There was a Christian sect in Russia, which did not

allow the interment of children, passing away unbaptised, in Christian graveyards. They regarded such children as un-saved, and hence cremated them. The custom was the logical conclusion of the Church doctrine that salvation depends upon faith in Jesus' atonement. Blessed be the memory of the benefictor of the human race who arose in the sands of Arabia and liberated mankind of all such accursed principles, replacing the Gospel of Faith by the GOSPEL OF ACTION and declaring that salvation is the birth-right of every human child. But the pity of pities again! Those that were given this blessed Gospel became fatalists whereas those that were fatalists took to this Muslim GOSPEL OF ACTION.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GREAT GOSPEL.

"Man shall have nought but whatever he has striven for."

THE Holy Qur-án epitomizes in this beautiful expression the whole of the Gospel of Action. Though apparently in the form of a warning, it is, nevertheless, pregnant with the happiest of tidings to mankind. It brings us the Divine assurance that our exertions shall in no wise come to nought; nay, they shall be rewarded plentifully. The abundant blessings of God are there round about us; we have but to stretch our hand to make them our own. The rich treasures of heaven which contribute so immensely to our well-being and happiness await just a move on our part to unfold.

Could there be a happier message to mankind than that contained in these few words? They lay all our doubts and fears as to the fructification of our toils and labours at rest. What Divine arrangement has assigned to us is no more than honest exertion. As to the fruit, we are told we need have no anxiety. It will of itself come to us. Nor do we stand in any need of capital. Whatever capital is needed to start with has already been bestowed upon all alike as a free gift from the Lord. Our hands and feet, our various faculties are the only capital

needed. The material for these powers to work upon has also been provided in great abundance. We have not to look up to others for anything needful. What a spirit of independence is inculcated in the expression! For the achievement of our ends, we have not to depend upon another's sweet will, intercession, recommendation and so forth. We have been taught thorough self-reliance. Our effort, even though no more than just a mustard seed, shall have its due reward. Thus man has been liberated from abject dependence on others' favours and a spirit of self-reliance and self-respect fostered in him.

No great achievement is possible without self-reliance. The great men of history—men that made a mark in their particular line—owed their success, in a large measure, to the quality of self-reliance. Wealth, power and other such-like means necessary for a certain undertaking, are futile unless supplemented by the firm sense of self-reliance. Thus, in infusing into man this spirit of absolute independence, and cultivating in him an unshakeable conviction of his own powers, the Holy Qur-án has furnished him with an equipment, without which no success is possible.

In this connection I have a word to say to my Muslim brethren. Have you ever cared to take these Qur-ánic truths to heart? You claim to have faith in the Word of God, but have you ever thought it worth your while to make its teachings your guiding principles in daily life? You say, Allah is *Rahman* and *Rahim*, but

do you realize the significance of these Divine attributes? As amply discussed in these pages, is it possible that a Muslim whom God has fully equipped for this struggle of life, should get pushed to the wall? Islam and degradation can not go together. If you are true Muslims—Muslims not only in word but also in deed—you can come to no humiliation. "Do not be depressed, nor be aggrieved", says the Book of God, "for surely you are the highest of all, provided you are true believers".

Jesus prayed for the Kingdom of Heaven; but the Holy Qur-án gave its charter to mankind. This kingdom was established on earth for some three decades, at the very inception of Islam. But soon thereafter, its principles gave way to human self-assertiveness. Hu'aviya was the first to violate the basic principle of such a kingdom—the nomination of the Khalifa by general election. The form of government presented in the Holy Qur-án, for which Jesus prayed, is the best kind of a republican government. Such a government must partake of the above mentioned characteristics of the Kingdom of God on earth. In the Divine Kingdom there is no distinction between man and man, so far as the distribution of blessings is concerned. There is no colour bar, no creed bar, no nation bar, no race bar, in the even-handed ministration of Heaven.

Let Muslims rise this very day and take firmly to the Gospel of Action. No matter if

they have no wealth, no means. They possess, what in fact is the only thing needed—the Power of Action. Let them make the best use of their faculties—their hands and feet, their eyes and ears, their heads and their hearts. "The earth of the Lord is extensive enough", says the Holy Qur-án. Let them make a way for themselves. I do not refer to the sort of *Hijrat* (emigration) lately undertaken by the Muslims of India. Such a *Hijrat* only betrays ignorance of the real significance of the act. Would that they were possessed of the spirit underlying *Hijrat*—in fact its very essence! It is a key to all success. Not only does our Muslim era, but the very power and glory of Islam, dates from *Hijrat*. This requires treatment in a separate volume. Suffice to point out here that whether you stay at home or go abroad, wherever you are, you must have your Power of Action by you. Leaving it behind, no amount of *Hijrat* will avail you in any land. This is a capital to which no earthly pelf can stand any comparison. You might roam over vast territories, but if you do not possess this, you will fare no better. Look at trees! Plant different species of them in the same place. Each one will find the nourishment that suits its particular needs, from the same environment. All it must possess, is the power of absorption. The moment this power is weakened, no change of environment will do it any good. No doubt, change is sometimes necessary; for instance, when the soil is marshy

or otherwise unfit. But the fact remains none the less that no other soil will be of any use, unless the power of absorption is there, within the plant itself. What is true of plant life, is equally true of human life. If a man does not possess the power of action, mere change of place will avail him little. Even in the life to come, we shall be what we are in this. Whatever our actual state in this life, the same will continue in the hereafter. "Who is blind", says the Holy Qur-án, "in this life, will also be blind in the life to come". Mere change of place, even though it were from earth to heaven, can bring about no change in ourselves. Let us, therefore, strive to cultivate high morals, develop a truly Muslim character, in a word, foster the power of action in ourselves. Before long, whatever we have lost will of itself come to us. We shall require no assistance, no support from others. We must learn to stand on our own legs, without reclining on others, no matter if our progress be very slow in the beginning. It may take decades to walk, but walk we must on our own legs. Calamities and misfortunes only come to give us a character. "And give good news", says the Holy Qur-án, "to the patient ones, who, when a calamity befalls them, say: Surely from God we are and unto God we go back".

Heed not whatever misfortunes and difficulties beset your way. They are meant to give you a moral tone. "The day of *ibtila* (calamity) is the day of purification", says a report from the

Prophet. *Ibtila* means putting gold into a crucible in order to purify it of dross. Calamities likewise come as blessings in disguise, to purge us of our blemishes. Let them, therefore, not stand in our way. They should rather serve as a spur to our Power of Action.

Whatever is indispensable as an equipment, each one of you has been endowed with, in the fullest measure. Among you are Avicennas, Tariqs, Muhammad-the-Conquerors, even to-day, but in a potential form. What made them great can make you great. It was the Qur-ánic rule of conduct—Man shall have nought but whatever he has striven for—that brought out their latent greatness; it is the same and nothing but the same, that can to-day bring out your dormant powers to full fruition. Your glory lies in this Qur-ánic teaching—in the GOSPEL OF ACTION.

CHAPTER IX.

LET THE QURAN BE THY LIGHT.

THE Holy Qur-án has laid down the general course that must inevitably lead to success, in any walk of life. The Chapter styled *Al-'Asr* (the Time) teaches us how to save ourselves and our nation from the ravaging influences of time. Another called *Kausar* (the Plenty) leads us to plenty and prosperity. Likewise there is no branch of human activities but the Book contains light to guide us therein. By way of illustration, I would here invite attention to the all-comprehensive method of attaining to the top in any line, so as to make one an authority in that particular sphere. The various stages leading up to such a thorough mastery, have been laid down in the chapter known as *An-Nazi'at,* which runs thus: "Consider those that fully withdraw from all else, then those that find pleasure in their pursuit, then those that become like swimmers (masters) in it, then those that excel all others, then those that become experts in the particular line".

In order to attain thorough mastery in some sphere of life, one must follow the above course. First of all, he must absorb himself in the particular hobby, to the utter neglect of everything else. This may be irksome in the beginning,

but gradually one gets accustomed to it and then one's heart finds pleasure in it. He must keep on at it, as a duck in the water. Having attained such a mastery, he will naturally excel all others and will be looked up to as an authority in the particular line.

Could you point to a single instance where mastery in any sphere of life has been achieved in a way other that this laid down by the Holy Qur-án? Study the life of any great man anywhere and in any branch of human activities and you will find that the various steps in the course of his progress are exactly the same. What an irony of fate! The Holy Qur-án enjoins you to adopt this course in all your undertakings but you have given it up. Whereas those that have no faith in the Book have taken to it in their daily life and are consequently far ahead in the race of life.

"I must get to the top"—this aught to be the goal of every Muslim. This tendency to excel others is instinctive in man and prolific of immense good, if kept within legitimate bounds. In fact, Islam has laid so great an emphasis on the Unity of God, mainly to strengthen this innate tendency to outdo all others. The Unity of God implies the equality of man, and hence the logical sequence—what one man has done, another can do. A man cannot be a true Unitarian, unless he should have a firm faith in the truth that he can also achieve what another has achieved. "I am but a man, like unto you", are the Qur-ánic words

put in the Holy Prophet's mouth, to impress the same idea—that in the acquisition of anything, one man enjoys perfect equality with another. One that gives way to the belief that B cannot do what A has done, is not a Unitarian in the true sense of the word.

Be it noted that wherever the Holy Qur-án speaks of the Holy Prophet's high attainments, it points out at the same time, the ways and means necessary for such attainments. For the sake of illustration, consides the Qur-ánic verse: "Surely We have given you abundance of good; therefore pray to your Lord and make sacrifice. Surely your enemy is cut off (from good)".

In these verses, the Holy Qur-án speaks of the Holy Prophet's future achievements in the past tense to emphasize that they must without fail come about. He has, however, shown the way leading thereto, viz. "Pray to your Lord and make sacrifice". Prayer and sacrifice are thus the two means whereby one can achieve the success attained by the Holy Prophet.

Herein lies a golden lesson for Muslims and especially for those that are responsible in one way or another for the guidance of others. Now-a-days, when true leadership is urgently in demand, mock leaders have everywhere sprung up with mushroom growth. Desire of name and fame is undoubtedly one great incentive to national work, and properly regulated, there is nothing objectionable in it. By his very nature, man has two longings — that he should free himself of all his

burdens and that he may win a name. These instinctive tendencies urge one to great activity and as such they may be regarded as the mainsprings of human action. But run riot, these may give birth to numerous vices, such as conceit, showiness, back-biting, fault-finding, scoffing, ridiculing, derision and so forth.

This is a deep ethical problem expounded by the Holy Qur-án. Ordinarily, morals are divided into two groups — good and bad. But the Book of God revealed the fact that at bottom, both kinds of morals are the same. Both have their origin in one and the same natural craving in man, one manifestation of which is good, another, evil. The sole purpose of a religion is to lay down these limits of good and evil. Would that some Muslims of learning could propound the Qur-ánic ethics before the scientific world! The conversion of the West to Islam, would present no great difficulty, should such literature find broadcast circulation.

Constituted as man is, he longs to see his burdens removed and his name exalted. These are two very useful passions ingrained in the nature of man, inasmuch as they lead to some very high morals. These two desires can find satisfaction through expansion of one's breast, in other words, through the breadth of his sympathies, which in turn can be cultivated only through spending in the way of God. Spontaneous charity and expansion of breast are inter-dependent and lead inevitably to the removal of one's burdens

and the exaltation of his name. Serving others at one's own expense is the key to the achievement of both these ends. The Holy Qur-án refers to it in the words, "and who spend of what We have given him". This is intended for the cultivation in us of that "breadth of sympathies" without which we can never achieve light-heartedness. To illustrate the point, take the case of a man of narrow sympathies. What may be of extreme pain to him and may almost break his back, may be only trifling from another's point of view, who has a larger heart. Mark the worry and anxiety of a child at the loss of a twopenny toy. His heart is too narrow to overlook it. When grown-up and his vision broadened, he might calmly put up with a heavy loss. Thus, with the expansion of heart, comes the complacent state of mind—state beyond the reach of cares and worries of the rough and tumble of life. And when one spends out of whatever he possesses, whether in the form of riches or powers, his name is ever remembered with respect. This truth has been expounded in these verses of the Holy Qur-án: "Have We not expanded for you your breast and taken off from you, your burden, which pressed heavily upon your back, and exalted your eminence?" In these few words, a world of wisdom has been embodied for the good of mankind—expansion of heart is the only way to the removal of all burdens and the achievement of eminence.

As to the details of how this expansion of heart is attained, you may consult the Holy Qur-án.

One of these, as I have already said, is that we should spend of what is dear to our heart, in the service of others. Thus worldly things will lose their weight in our eyes, which so often tend to break our backs, should we be deprived of them. Says the Holy Qur-án: "You shall not obtain goodness unless you spend out of what is dear to you".

These are the virtues which alone can help in the formation of a strong society—a society capable of shaking the whole world. These alone can cultivate character in man. To-day, we hear a cry of non-co-operation in India, on all sides. But unfortunately, there are not many who realize the true significance of non-co-operation. The first step towards true non-co-operation must be to create in our people a spirit of contempt for sordid, worldly boons, without which, all attempts may end in smoke.

In brief, the Holy Qur-án has bound up the attainment of eminence and the removal of burdens with the expansion of heart. The Holy Qur-án is replete with the ways and means to cultivate this breadth of breast. Their gist is contained in the following verses of the same chapter: "Surely with difficulty, is ease; so when you are free, strive hard and make your Lord your exclusive object".

So far as theory goes, every one looks upon pleasure and pain as twins. But there are very few that live up to this principle. Pleasure and pain follow each other like day and night, in

an incessant round. Is there a mortal that has not experience of these phases in his own life? We are all anxious, naturally enough, to achieve the one and avert the other. This is a life tendency and we can not help it. But true happiness and tranquillity can only be had through cultivating a mood of indifference to both these passing shows—pleasure and pain. Troubles are painful only to those who shiver before them. Similarly, absence of pleasure is felt only by those who are used to it. In this struggle of life, only those can win the laurels of success, who care little either about pleasure or pain. They alone, enjoy true peace of mind, who rise above those transitory moods. Pleasure does not elate them, nor does pain depress them. Under most trying calamities or maddening triumphs, their composure of mind remains unrippled. This is a stage of thorough submission to the Will of the Lord.

Characteristic of all greatness as this frame of mind is, it is nevertheless, not free from its own dangers. Should pleasure or pain lose all significance in my eyes, why should I work? All our efforts aim either at the achievement of pleasure or the avoidance of pain. When both are immaterial to us, we would not worry ourselves about either. Hence such a stoic indifference might tend to weaken our power of action. The world, with all its attractions, becomes what the Hindu philosophy calls *Maya* i. e. illusion, deception, unreality. This view of life has a

very detrimental effect on the civilization of a people. To my mind, this furnishes one explanation for the fact that the Hindus have been for long centuries under foreign subjection. When power, self, wife, children and all sorts of comforts of life are nothing in reality—*Maya,* mere illusion—where is the harm if some invader should commit the folly of depriving me of them. Such is the paralysing effect of this phase of a highly enviable attitude of mind—indifference to pleasure and pain—on practical life.

What a critical situation! This spirit or indifference is so indispensable for great achievements in every walk of life. It helps us in surmounting all obstacles, undaunted by the pitfalls besetting our way. Unflinchingly we pursue our course in the very teeth of difficulties; for pleasure and pain have lost all their potency to effect our Power of Action in any way. Thus indifference is helpful as an impetus to sustained exertion in spite of what might depress a man of common clay. But the very object is defeated, should we allow it to lead us to that frame of mind which regards everything worldly, as unreal, moonshine, *maya.* Such a mentality would naturally result in dead inertia. Thus what was intended to strengthen and sustain our Power of Action in the face of trials and temptations, tends on the contrary, to sap all our vital energy. Unfortunately, Indian Muslims, influenced by a wrong conception of mysticism, are also drifting

towards such a view of life. Worldly objects are regarded as incompatible with things spiritual and hence the general lassitude and inertia. Buddhist teachings also placed the same goal before man—extinction of self. The Christian outlook on life has also the same tendency and as long as Europe was in the grip of the Church, it was sunk deep in ignorance and superstition. It was with the Renaissance when the shackles of the Church dogmas were broken, that the vistas of science and learning were opened before Christendom. Islam came to cut this Gordian knot and offered the best solution of the problem—the *Via media* between the two extremes.

Diametrically opposed to the state of things in the East, is the state prevailing in the West. There, the pendulum has swung to the other extreme. Worldly pleasures and comforts are to them, the be-all and end-all of life. They are practically the slaves of their carnal passions and leave no stone unturned to secure their gratification. The means, whether fair or foul, matter little to them. They must appease their worldly hankerings, even though at the cost of the very fundamental rights of humanity.

Thus, the East and the West stand at opposite Poles, in this respect. Contempt for the world, in one case, has led to the paralysis of human faculties, resulting in their backward position in the race of civilization. Passion for it in the other has given birth to unbridled greed and

self-aggrandisement. Islam supplies the *Via Media,* where the twain can meet, with advantage to each. Islams enjoins that we should exert every nerve in procuring worldly comforts, not for ourselves, but for others. Our aim must be the promotion of other's welfare. Thus on the one hand, we are stimulated to activity and thereby our faculties are saved from getting paralysed, as is inevitable in the case of inactivity; whereas on the other, we are secured against falling a prey to self-seeking passions with the host of evils attendant thereupon. We must work, but spend the produce of our labours in the good of others; in this should consist our true happiness. Thus we get an impetus to self-exertion and at the same time, keep above pleasure and pain. For it is not in the achievement of certain things that lies our happines. We have cultivated the faculty of finding pleasure in ministering to the comfort of others. The objects, themselves, are neither pleasant nor painful to us. If I succeed in achieving them, well and good. If not, I do not worry about it; for I miss nothing, nor lose anything.

Thus, these few verses inculcate three-fold virtues: indifference to pleasure and pain, self-exertion, spending in the service of humanity. These create in us the expansion of the heart, remove all burdens off our back, and secure us eminence in the world.

I have not penned these lines simply to show the moral worth of the Qur-ánic teachings. My

express purpose is to address them to those of my Muslim brethren, who are lacking in all these Islamic virtues, so necessary for success in this life as well as for happiness in the life to come. I have only to exhort them to open this Book of Wisdom, on which they have, to their own misfortune, turned their back. Let them find light and guidance in these pages and live up to its teachings. I have just a word to say to our leaders. Let them realize what true leadership consists in. In some cases, conviction in a political case is regarded as the only certificate to leadership. This has drawn many an undesirable within the fold of leadership. Such pseudo-leaders follow the short-cut to leadership, by joining their voices with the general chorus, in season and out of season. The particular course may be detrimental to the best interests of the community, but what of that? Their only concern is to keep in the good books of the masses. They sacrifice the real good of their people to their passion for leadership. More often than not, a true leader has to go in opposition to the wishes of the people. He has to guide them; he must not drift with them. Irksome as the task is, it is nevertheless the only true credential to real leadership. Let our leaders rise above such petty considerations. They must take it upon themselves to train their followers in public life and look only to their best interests, regardless of whether it would win them their favour or disfavour. These are days of hard trial for Islam and we

can ill-afford to indulge in such self-seeking adventures. Let the leaders cultivate the true virtues of leadership, rise above pleasure and pain, as taught in the above-mentioned verses, and with a single-minded devotion, work for the true interests of their people.

To-day we find ourselves beset with difficulties on all sides. We have just awakened to the sense of the plight we are in. Naturally enough, we are in a state of utter perplexity, not knowing which course to adopt and which not. The best way is to consult the Holy Qur-án at each step we take. The Holy Qur-án, of all the religious Books of the world, is the one Book that furnishes guidance concerning every phase of human life. I wonder why our leaders should not have it before them as their guiding star. Why should we be afraid of our present miserable condition when we possess what may be called a panacea for all human ills. There is nothing in the world, but is on its way to decadence. The whole of nature around us, bears the fact out. There is only one way to safe-guard against this all-prevailing loss—following a prescribed set of laws with which is bound up the safety and fructification of things. It is our religious duty to ascertain the one straight path of success in every sphere of life—in art, in industry, in science, in learning, in agriculture, in business—and having ascertained it, strictly keep to it and make our brethren follow it. This is one way of nation-building. We should not be stingy in

benefiting others from our own experience. Whatever principles of success we should discover, we should promulgate broadcast among our brethren. It is another great misfortune that people do not heed a well-meaning piece of advice. On the other hand, all sorts of motives are ascribed to such an adviser. But the times are so critical that our leaders should not mind the taunts of such ignorant folk, but unflinchingly carry on teaching, preaching and guiding.

This is a course laid down in the Holy Qur-án, to avert all sorts of risks and dangers. This is what it says:

> Consider the time.
> Most surely man is in loss.
> Except those who believe and do good, and enjoin on each other truth, and enjoin on each other patience. (103 : 1, 2, 3.)

In conclusion, I would say just a word as to what appears to me the very cement of building up a solid nation. I mean mutual respect. This is a thing we are unfortunately lacking in, as a community. It is high time that we should learn to look for the good in others, instead of picking loop-holes. Mutual appreciation, mutual confidence, mutual good-will should inspire all our movements. Even if we come across certain flaws in the ways of our friends, who are thoroughly honest in their motives, we should learn to overlook them. In a word, I would say, our mutual relations should be as sweet as the Holy Qur-án wants them to be:

The believers are but brethren, therefore make peace between your brethren and be careful of (your duty to) Allah that mercy may be had on you.

O you who believe! let not (one) people laugh at (another) people, nor let women (laugh) at (other) women, perchance they may be better than they, and do not find fault with your own people nor call one another by nick-names; evil is a bad name after faith, and whoever does not turn, these it is that are the unjust.

O you who believe! avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is a sin, and do not spy nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of your dead brother? But you abhor it; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, surely Allah is Oft-returning (to mercy) Merciful.

O you men! Surely We have created you of a male and female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the most honourable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful (of his duty); surely Allah is Knowing, Aware. (49: 10—13.)

The last words of this quotation are worthy of special note. The Bedouins are told that though they have accepted Islam, they are not entitled to be called *Mu'mins* (Believers) on that score. Mere profession does no doubt bring them within the fold of Islam, but can not carry them beyond that. To be *Mu'mins* they must live up to the truths they have accepted. Considering our own pratical life as a nation, do we not find ourselves in the same boat with the Bedouins addressed in these verses?

The Holy Qur-án abounds in the principles of a highly civilized life. But are they meant as an academic discussion of certain truths? No, the object is a practical one. It is for our

benefit, for our success, for our prosperity, that all these ways have been shown. A Muslim, in fact, ought to be leading the van of civilization. He is supposed to be the "Caliph of God on earth", as the Holy Qur-án calls him. The ways and means wherewith to achieve this Divine viceroyalty on earth, have also been laid down in a nutshell in the same passage, where it says, "and he gave Adam the knowledge of all things". Knowledge of the properties of things, of the laws of the Universe, of the principles regulating anything, is in fact, the key to all success. "O Lord", says the Holy Qur-án elsewhere, "Thou hast not created this (universe) in vain". Have you ever pondered over these words, which are in fact meant to invite your attention to the rich treasures that lie imbedded in the realms of nature, which we have only to explore and make our own? The West took this lesson to heart, and with what result is too obvious to need any telling. What you threw off as worthless trash, they converted into silver and gold. The small pieces of bones that you give them for pennies, come back to you in changed shapes and take pounds out of your pockets. I cannot over-emphasize the exhortation that my Muslim brethren must not confine the scope of religion to the observance of certain rituals—prayer, fasting, poor-rate, Haj and so forth. Religion is co-expansive with life. In the factory, in the shop, in the street or in the house, is there a sphere where there is not an opportunity for the exer-

cise of religion? The chapter of the Holy Qur-án, called *Jumma,* calls all these avocations of ours the blessings of the Lord. I would also entreat our religious and spiritual teachers to address themselves in right earnest to enlightening the Muslim masses on the numerous social, moral, political, commercial, industrial and all such principles as have a bearing on the practical life. We have had enough of hair-splitting in the way of doctrinal discussions and polemics. It is time for work, for action, for manfully taking our place on the field of action and maintaining our own in the keen-struggle of life. Surely the Holy Qur-án is meant for something far higher than mere academic disputes. It is a perennial spring of life-giving water. Let our *Ulemas* (theologians) bring them within our reach, and thereby quicken our dead nation to life.

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